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THE PSYCHOLOGY OF
RELIGIOUS ADJUSTMENT



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THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGIOUS ADJUSTMENT

BY

EDMUND S. CONKLIN

PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY IN
THE UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

New York,

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*This book is dedicated to my wife,
HELEN HOLBROOK CONKLIN,
whose enduring interest in the in-
terpretations presented led to their
arrangement for the use of others.*

PREFACE

I have written this book with the profound conviction that it is profitable to keep the field of psychology distinct from theology and the philosophy of religion. While I am not ignorant of theology and the philosophy of religion, I have studiously sought to keep such knowledge as I have of those subjects entirely in the background. The book is written as a study of certain forms of human behavior, and for me a study of behavior must include the conscious accompaniments. It should not, however, be looked upon as anything more than a study of behavior. There is in it no intentional brief for any form of religious faith nor for any form of anti-religious doctrine. There is no reason, of course, why the material here presented should not be utilized by theologians and philosophers of religion for its larger significances, if they find anything which seems of possible service to them. But my aim has been the more humble one of seeking merely to bring together facts and psychological interpretations of religious conduct, and to consider them in the light of contemporary psychological thought. I am confident that this procedure has greatly clarified my own thinking on these subjects. I hope it may do as much for others.

At times the presentation will appear dogmatic, and many will no doubt accuse me of "arm-chair" psychologizing. Both seem to me unavoidable. If my style at times is dogmatic, it far from represents my attitude of mind. I might have used the conditional

phrases and clauses necessary to avoid the dogmatism, but they would have appeared so frequently as to make the style clumsy and disagreeable. My friends know that on these subjects I am far from sharing the arbitrary traits of the dogmatist. It is also true that much psychological speculation will be found here. Controlled experimentation in the psychology of religion has scarcely begun. If I had waited for its development before I tried to acquire working concepts for the psychological interpretation of religious phenomena, I should have been obliged to go through life without seeking to interpret even tentatively. Such a refusal to think is possible perhaps, but I am inclined to the opinion that those who pretend to avoid all thought on such subjects are usually freighted with much prejudiced opinion. To avoid those prejudices for myself and others I have sought to psychologize. I am perfectly aware that the interpretations presented must, in most instances, be considered as tentative; but I believe that tentative interpretations are preferable to the prejudices which grow from the effort to avoid thinking.

Only one who has given the subject serious consideration can know how incredibly vast is the literature on religion. If any one claims to have read it all, I shall hereafter think him either pitifully ignorant or suffering some form of mental aberration. I do not even claim to have read everything on the psychology of religion, although I have read much and sincerely hope that I have not overlooked any very important contribution. Much of what one has to read in this field, as in so many others, is quite worthless. Many titles represent presentations which include some valuable mate-

rial buried in much confusing complication with devotional appeals and theological considerations. I have thought it better not to try to make a comprehensive list of the volumes and pamphlets and monographs consulted, but have sought through footnote references to furnish a guide for those who seek an introduction to the literature. I have, of course, given credit wherever I have re-presented the ideas of others, and to such references I have often made some additions which might further aid the inquiring student.

This book is the culmination of many years of leisure-hour reading and thought. The subject has interested me ever since my college days, and in the years between I have devoted much time to the quest of an understanding of the thoughts and feelings and religious experiences of those whose religious background and outlook are very different from my own. I had a New England Protestant training. Since then I have spent much time with the people and the literature of many churches and many faiths, Roman Catholics, Christian Scientists, Mormons, Jews, and many others. To numerous churchmen, ministers or priests or rabbis or apostles or elders or deacons or by whatever title they may be officially designated, I am enormously indebted. And all of them have talked to me freely when they found that I earnestly desired to learn their point of view. Some of these contacts have grown into highly valued friendships. I sincerely hope that the presentations herein may in every instance do them full justice.

E. S. C.

EUGENE, OREGON,
September, 1929.

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CHAPTER I

THE RELATION OF PSYCHOLOGY TO RELIGION

The ways of psychologists have changed greatly since those ancient days when psychology was primarily a study of the human soul. There have been changes not only of method but also of point of view, and especially of subject matter. Today the psychologist studies the behavior of living human beings and how that behavior is related to consciousness. Only the greatest confusion can result if a modern book on the psychology of any subject is read with the assumption that the author is presenting the findings obtained by careful studies of the soul.

Psychology and the Soul.—It is an often repeated assertion that psychology today is a psychology without a soul. In a certain sense that is true. It is certainly true that the term soul rarely appears in contemporary reports of psychological researches, and it is seldom discovered in the books which psychologists write. But this cannot wisely be construed to mean that psychology has denied the existence, the reality, of the soul. While some hasty minds may have uttered

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such denials, they did so not as psychologists but as human beings privileged, as are all men, to toy with great problems and to enunciate philosophical beliefs and disbeliefs no matter how immature or inadequate they may be. Much less can this assertion that psychology is without a soul be interpreted to mean that psychological experimentation has proved the soul to be non-existent, the undemonstrable figment of primitive thinking. What the assertion does mean is that psychologists, along with so many other kinds of scientists, have moved away from the philosophical. They have become almost exclusively occupied with that which is empirical, with that which can be directly experienced, observed and described.

Conscious processes can be observed and described. Habits can be studied, instincts can be experimented with, emotional effects can be recorded, intelligence and other capacities can be measured; but the soul of man is not subject to study or experiment or record or measure. It is something apart from and in addition to experience. There are some psychologists, still fond of philosophizing, who insist that all these processes which the psychologist studies presuppose something behind or underneath which possesses them and unifies them. It is this underlying or unifying something which they call the soul. But even such psychologists admit that the soul is beyond experience and experiment. Even this thought is not new. Christian thinkers have long conceived of man as having three parts: body, mind, and spirit. Influenced by both Greek and Hebrew thinkers the early Christian theologians conceived of man as composed of something in addition to the body

and the mind. The Apostle Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians (I Cor. 2:10-16), in describing the human individual, wrote of the body and of two other aspects one of which he termed the psyche and one the pneuma. The first of these could not receive nor could it understand the things of God, but the latter could. The more earthly of the two, the part most closely related to the body, is that which came to be known as mind. The other is known as the spirit or soul of man, and is that which the psychologist does not seek to study.

Empirical Versus Rational Psychology.—Before experimental psychology appeared, another distinction came into psychological thinking which still lingers and thus deserves acquaintance. It is the distinction between empirical and rational psychology. Empirical psychology is the kind of psychology to be found in practically all textbooks of the subject today. It is the kind of psychology that most people are familiar with. It is the psychology of introspection, of objective experiment, and of measurement. Rational psychology concerns the relationships of all the data thus found to the problems of the soul, to the doctrine of immortality for example. Rational psychology is in many circles more frequently thought of today as philosophy or theology, but there are occasionally textbooks ¹ which present, with careful distinctions to be sure, both empirical and rational psychology. The literature of the psychology of religion which has accumulated in the last twenty-five years is very largely of the empirical psychological nature. The material of this book is the

¹ See Maher, Michael, *Psychology, Empirical and Rational*. New York, Longmans, 1902. Pp. 610.

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outgrowth of the consideration of religion from the point of view of empirical psychology. It is thus confined to religious habits, thoughts, feelings, emotions, and attitudes and is not at all concerned with the life and problems of the soul.

The Self Concept.—There is yet another distinction which the reader of contemporary literature on the psychology of religion should keep in mind, especially because authors of textbooks in psychology not infrequently forget to keep the distinction clear. This concerns the two different meanings designated by the single term self or ego. Properly these two meanings should be indicated by the qualifying adjectives empirical and metaphysical. By metaphysical self or ego, authors designate that soul or spirit which is beyond the reach of observation, experiment and description. By empirical self or ego they designate that concept of one's self which every one knows. The metaphysical self may have been in existence from birth or from conception or even prior to that time, such matters are not within the purview of the psychologist, but the empirical self is a concept which has grown out of sensory and perceptive and imaginal experience just as have all other concepts. It is in quite the same class as an individual's concept of house, or tree, or animal, or physics, or chemistry, or of religion for that matter. This empirical self, considered as a concept, did not exist when the individual was born and came into existence but gradually thereafter. And the self concept in most people undergoes many changes. It and its content figure prominently in religious activities and experiences but must never be confused with the meta-

physical self or ego or soul or spirit. This must be watched for because it is not customary to use the qualifying adjectives. In this book, however, the term self will almost invariably mean the empirical ego concept.

Psychoanalysis and the Soul.—Another source of possible confusion will be found in the popularity of psychoanalytic ways of thinking and speaking. And one of these ways is to use soul freely as a psychological term. Unless one reads psychoanalytic authors warily one may easily be misled. They are not writing of the soul or spirit of the theologians, nor do they mean the self concept of the experimental psychologists. When they use the term soul they mean to designate thereby the sum total of all in an individual that is conscious or foreconscious or unconscious. Sometimes they speak of the psychic aspect of a person, or, more briefly, of his psyche. This psychic aspect is the parallel of his body. Whatever appears as a living organism has also its psychic aspect. Some of this psychic aspect is conscious or aware, but only a very small part of the psychic aspect is so differentiated. By far the larger part of the psychic aspect is thought of as lacking awareness and hence it is spoken of as subconscious. For other reasons, which need not be introduced here, the subconscious is thought of as partly foreconscious and partly unconscious, but in either case it is the non-conscious part of the psychic aspect. Psychoanalytic thinking has in some ways contributed valuably to the interpretation of religious behavior, but what the psychoanalysts have said must not be thought of as applicable to the soul of the theologians.

Psychology and Pseudo-psychology.—Most scientific psychologists are much annoyed by what they consider to be an illegitimate use of the term psychology. Most bookstores now display their tables of publications on psychology. But when one pauses to look them over one finds most of them to be books of a mystical, semi-religious or pietistic nature rather than works which reflect the studies of modern empirical psychology. Perhaps the authors of these religious books can be justified for making such a use of the word psychology, but their point of view is the antithesis of that which dominates the authors of the academic or scientific psychologies of religion. The one is essentially religious while the other is merely writing about religion, considering religion as a form of human institution and of behavior subject to description and analysis exactly as are all other forms of human behavior.

Relation to Theology and Ethics.—Nor should the psychology of religion be confused with theology. In terms of the foregoing distinctions it might be said that theology is concerned with the soul or spirit of man while the psychology of religion is concerned with his mental and physical behavior when he says he is experiencing religion. But, in terms of the dictionary, theology is to be thought of as a division of philosophy, and so that should be defined first. The definition of philosophy is not, however, an easy matter. James once said that it was but an unusually stubborn effort to think clearly. He meant, of course, to think clearly about some very large and very difficult subjects. More specifically it might be said that the philosopher is trying to weave into a logically consistent whole all of

the knowledge of mankind. The many gaps in man's knowledge makes it necessary for the philosopher to piece out his material with theories or hypotheses. The philosopher is seeking to achieve the most satisfactory conception of the universe as a whole. But individual philosophers work on specific problems within this one large task, and so some are concerned with conduct and the concepts of right and wrong, others seek to understand the nature and laws of beauty, while yet others are concerned with the nature and attributes of God and His relation to man. These last are the theologians. Theology then is a field of thought quite distinct from that of the psychologist of religion. The psychologist might observe how certain ideas of God arose and what effects they have upon human behavior for example, and he might interpret these in terms of the psychology of thinking, perceiving, feeling, instinct and emotion, but he would not be in the slightest degree guilty of trespassing upon the domain of the theologians.

Nor should the psychology of religion be confused with ethics. While the psychologist is examining a religion or any form of religious behavior he drops entirely all considerations of good and bad. He does not care whether the particular religion he is studying or the special form of religious behavior immediately undergoing analysis happens to be looked upon as good or bad. It may even be thought of by some good people as wholly degenerate. The psychologist's only concern would be to understand if possible how this particular form of religion had come to be and to persist. Later on, after he had finished his task, he might become again the citizen, the religious man and moralist and

as such join with his fellow citizens in their condemnation or praise. But while he is psychologizing he has no thought for praise or blame but merely to understand. Psychologists of religion have all too often suffered from the hasty criticism of those who were not quick to recognize this distinction.²

Limitations to Psychology of Religion.—Thus it is one of the tasks of the psychologist to study that behavior which man calls religious. There are inevitable limitations to this, limitations which do not appear in other fields of psychological work. This can be most easily observed by comparing a simple non-religious instance with one which is definitely religious. Suppose a child is frightened by a man dressed up as Santa Claus. This can be explained in terms of an instinct-emotion pattern responsive to a large, new, strange and furry creature. Possibly also the fear response is in part conditioned by what the child has been told at home about the necessity of being good till Santa comes. This seems a fairly adequate interpretation, and it can be checked in part by observing the change in the child's behavior when the Santa Claus man removes his mask and reveals a face with which the child is quite familiar. A different perception results in a different emotional response. The whole may be explained in terms of innate and acquired patterns, attitudes, stimuli and perceptions. But the case is not quite so simple when some forms of religious behavior are under consideration.

² For amplification of these distinctions the reader will do well to consult A. S. Woodburne's *The Religious Attitude: A Psychological Study of its Differentiation* (Macmillan, 1927), and the first two chapters of J. B. Pratt's *The Religious Consciousness* (Macmillan, 1920).

It is possible to observe a human being in a church, before an altar, saying a prayer. The whole attitude as well as the facial expression indicates a meditative, relaxed, peaceful state of mind. The individual might even describe immediately afterward and state that it was an inspiring and comforting religious experience. The psychologist would then proceed to explain the religious state of mind as due to certain instinct-emotion patterns and attitudes activated by the stimulating situation of the church and the prayerful words of the worshiper. He would be proceeding in exactly the same manner as that which proved so satisfactory in the case of the child with the Santa Claus. But here enters the complication. Theologians frequently assert that there is a stimulus or effective influence in addition to all those just mentioned. As one result of their investigations the theologians claim that they are justified in concluding that God, or the Holy Spirit, works directly upon the mind of the worshiper, that all those stimuli and patterns and attitudes of the psychologist are supplemented by this direct intervention. It is not for the psychologist to deny the theologian's assertions. The psychologist is not trained in theology. He is an empirical scientist and must work within the field of empirical psychology. He must leave to the philosopher the task of bringing together the data of psychology and theology. By so much the psychologist is admittedly a partial workman, he works on a part of the problem only. He works with states of mind which are described to him, with the behavior which he can observe, and with the stimuli which can be directly studied. If the theologian asserts that in

certain instances there has been an additional stimulus or effect from the supernatural, the psychologist can but acquiesce. So again it must be emphasized that there are limitations to the mere psychology of religion.³

A similar argument applies also to the study of many religious concepts. The psychologist of religion may study in detail the appearance and development of the concept of god in one person or in many, or he may study the development and changes in the concept of the Holy Spirit, or he may likewise study the concept of a devil. But he studies these entirely without question of the objective existence of something corresponding to the god concept or the Holy Spirit concept or the devil concept. For the psychologist they are concepts to be studied in their development and their effects like all other concepts. This has sometimes appeared to be irreverent, but when the reader keeps in mind that the psychologist is working only with the concepts, and entirely without implication of objective reality or unreality, there should be no misunderstanding. Nor with the distinctions between natural and revealed religion has the psychologist as a psychologist any concern. He is working merely with the feelings, emotions, attitudes, perceptions, conceptions, beliefs and habits of human beings; and so far as stimuli are studied the psychologist is inevitably limited to the consideration of those which are within the physical world.

³ If the reader desires to examine the theological presentations for himself, he will find in the following a convenient introduction—*Outlines of Christian Theology* by W. N. Clarke (Scribner's, 1898), *The Faith of Our Fathers* by J. (Cardinal) Gibbons, and *Current Christian Thinking* by G. B. Smith (University of Chicago Press, 1928).

This attitude of the psychologist and delimitation of his work may appear to be peculiarly inhuman. It is rather unhuman and it is of necessity so. But it should produce more competent human beings because of the increased knowledge achieved thereby. When one realizes that the psychologist is concerned not with Christianity alone but with all religions and sects, the necessity for this empirical and impartial relation becomes even more insistent. To the psychologist all forms of religion and all religious forms are alike, but bits of human behavior to be correlated and explained if possible. To the psychologist in essence all are one, be it the Protestant in his church, the churchman in his cathedral, the Mormon in his meetinghouse, the Jew in his synagogue, the Roman Catholic at mass, the Buddhist before his idol, the Mohammedan on his way to Mecca, or the Hottentot with his fetish.

Behavior Versus Behaviorism.—Because the term has been several times used the reader must not be frightened away by the bogey of behaviorism which has been raised by excessive newspaper publicity. There is a difference between studying human behavior and studying it with the preconceptions of the behaviorist. Behavior is a very convenient term and in its use here there is not the slightest intention of excluding consciousness from its designation. The term religious behavior well describes that inclusive range of human experience in which are feelings and emotions aroused by worshipful situations, by habits of prayer, by ceremonies elaborate or simple; in which are thoughts of the deity and of proprieties of conduct motivated by religious feelings; in which are the lives of the saints

and the martyrs and the missionary heroes; and in which are the activities resulting in religious architecture, statuary, painting, and music. The psychologist studies how such behavior is aroused, stimulated he likes to call it, and what in detail is the nature of each kind of experience when it has been aroused. Then, too, the many kinds of religious behavior have been productive of records, deeds, thoughts, theories, and much of what we term artistic. The nature of these products of the religious experience and of their effects in turn upon other human beings is within the field of the psychologist of religion. Sometimes religious behavior becomes distorted to such a degree as to be designated abnormal. Here, too, the psychologist with his rapidly growing knowledge of behavior abnormalities in general is able to offer much by way of interpretation.

The advantages of this independent, detached, psychological attitude are many, but especially do they appear in the clarity of thinking which results. One but needs to look through the collections of literature on religion in any good library to discover many instances where the theologian and the philosopher and perhaps still more often the evangelically minded preacher have tried to write on the psychology of religion with much confusion of the fields of thought and little contribution to the psychology of religious phenomena. Here the author will attempt to maintain the detached attitude of the psychologist and trust that by following that attitude for the space of this book, the reader may be assisted to some clearer thinking on matters religious. There should be no danger from such an attitude of detachment except as some minds

confuse explanation with explaining away. It should be obvious that a thing explained is not explained away. And yet some readers of the psychology of religion make the mistake of thinking that a religious custom or practice should be abandoned when it comes within the realm of the understood. Such a reaction is absurd in principle. No one would think of abandoning a farm merely because the soil thereon had been analyzed by some chemist. On the contrary one would proceed at once to farm the land the more profitably. It should be the same with increased understanding of religious phenomena.

CHAPTER II

IS RELIGION AN INSTINCT?

Many people are fond of asserting that religion is an instinct. Some people seem, curiously enough, to find much satisfaction in that as an explanation. But, even though religion should prove to have some instinctive basis, the mere assertion of that fact would be a very inadequate explanation of religion. Art cannot be explained by saying that it is an instinct, nor can morality, even though both may have some instinctive basis. No more can religion be explained by saying with an attitude of finality that "it is an instinct."

The scientific attitude toward instincts has changed greatly in the last decade. There was a time when almost any form of conduct, especially if it seemed to involve even vaguely some emotional urge, was readily attributed to an instinctive base. Long lists of instincts were made up, and some psychologists even went so far as to say that the number of human instincts was probably far greater than any list then available. But that was prior to the careful observation of human and animal behavior, and prior to the modern critical consideration of the instinct concept. Today the disposition of most psychologists is to avoid the use of the term unless it be clearly defined, and then it is considered wise not to use it in any specific case unless the innate nature of the motivation be quite beyond question.

The Nature of Instinct.—Two conceptions of the nature of instinct are current even among those who think cautiously and critically on the subject. One might be called the mechanistic conception. According to this view the instinct is supposed to be a pattern in the central nervous system which is not the product of environmental stimulation. The growth or development of this central nerve pattern is supposed to be determined by something in the germ plasm, in exactly the same way that the shape of the bones is determined, or of the muscles, or of the internal organs. The growth and form and nature is determined from within. The structure is there ready to function when the circumstances demand, or, putting it more technically, when the environment stimulates it into activity. Anger could be taken as an example. People do not learn how to be angry, and yet the course of nervous excitations and the amount and kind of organic activity in the body in the anger reaction is enormously complicated. All the necessary nerve patterns are apparently ready, prepared by nature, when the first anger arousing situation occurs. The pattern which functions in making a child run from the big and dangerous is cited as another example. Others consider walking as an elaborate pattern largely developed from within.

But, even though one accepts this mechanistic conception for the time being, one must have criteria of some sort by which to determine whether or not any given activity shall be looked upon as an instinct, as a habit, or as a willed act. Many criteria have been offered, some of which merit serious consideration. It has been said (1) that if the mode of behavior in ques-

tion appears in like manner in the higher animals then it may be accepted as instinctive. This seems to be true of anger, flight, nest building, and a good many other acts. Another criterion (2) much stressed is that of appearance prior to any possibility of learning. Obviously this is excellent but in use it often becomes very difficult to rule out the possibility of observation or instruction. Universality (3) has often been thought to be an incontestible criterion. Those forms of response characteristic of all mankind were by this principle accepted as of instinctive nature. But, excellent as this criterion seems to be, it is not wholly satisfactory. There are many well-nigh universal traits which no one thinks of as instinctive. Smoking is part of the behavior of vast numbers of mankind, so too is the use of intoxicating and of narcotic drugs, but these acts are not interpreted therefore as being instinctive. Certain diseased conditions are accepted as of inherent determination, Huntington's chorea and feeble-mindedness for example, but these are most certainly not universal. So the criterion of universality is to be used with great caution if used at all.

Persistence of form (4) has not infrequently been used for the determination of instinctive nature. It is contended that the instinctive reaction is comparatively unchangeable. New ways of arousing it may be acquired and some alterations in the mode of its expression are possible, but its essential nature is supposed to remain the same. Anger remains anger however it is stimulated and however it be expressed. There is yet another criterion worthy of consideration, although it does not so often appear in the textbooks.

That is (5) what might be termed the engulfing nature of the instinct. One is overcome by that which is instinctive. Fear may be held in check for a time but eventually one is swamped by it. So, too, anger may be held in check in part and for a time, but if much stimulated it overcomes all effort at control. For this reason, many contend that sleep is of the nature of an instinct, because, in spite of all effort to the contrary, sleep will eventually overcome whoever attempts to resist it.

Religion and the Criteria of Instinct.—If religion is to be classified or explained as an instinct, it must meet one or more of these criteria. It is of course theoretically possible for religious behavior to be instinctive. There might be an innately determined pattern responsive to certain words or situations. But what is the evidence for such an assumption? Students of animal behavior, and there have been many able ones in recent years, do not report religious activities even among the highest of the animals. Does religious experience appear prior to learning? That at least is debatable. Evidence has been brought forward in support of the assertion that certain individuals sensorily defective from birth or early infancy, deaf or deaf-blind, have reported that, before they were able to read or to understand any form of language, they had wondered about the nature of the world and if it were not operated by one all-powerful being. Such unusual instances are resorted to for proof because the normal child hears and sees so many religious symbols and customs. Evidence of this kind is not only very limited in quantity but is possibly subject to other interpretations. Instead of manifesting an innately determined religious reaction it may be the

functioning of an instinct of curiosity. Or it may be no instinct at all. It may be merely the effort of an individual hampered by sensory defect to interpret the world as he finds it.

Much weight has often been placed upon the universality of religious behavior. There is no race or people, so it is reliably reported, without something in their lives which could be designated as religious. In order to achieve this universality argument, however, it is sometimes necessary to make a very elastic definition of that which is to be accepted as religious. And it has already been pointed out that mere universality, or even a fair approximation thereto, is a very uncertain criterion of innate determination.

Religion seems better able to meet the criterion described above as the persistence of form. Time and time again the assertion has been made that the essence of religion persists from generation to generation no matter how its customs and thought systems may change. And, in the life of any individual, practices and beliefs may change but there is something of a religious nature which persists. Then it is but fair to ask for a clear conception of the nature of that which is the root, the core, the essence of religion. For this, one turns to the definitions of religion. But unfortunately one finds therein little that is enlightening. Professor Leuba some years ago published a list ¹ of forty-eight different definitions of religion (which he said was far from complete), and since then yet others have appeared. The enormous confusion which these

¹ Leuba, J. H., *A Psychological Study of Religion*. New York, Macmillan, 1912. See Appendix.

definitions present demonstrates that there is not a generally accepted conception of that essential nature of religion which might meet the persistence criterion. Here then is a problem which must be solved if there is to be clarity and completeness of thought in the psychology of religion. Solving it might result in discovering that the essence of religion which is persistent is not an instinct for religion at all but some other instinct, and it might be that there is no instinct involved whatsoever. One must be cautious here and maintain at least an open mind.

Except at certain times and in certain rather unusual individuals, the engulfing nature of instinct does not appear as a characteristic of religious experience. History records and every community reports from time to time some individuals who are easily overcome by the religious experience aroused. Many of these are not immune to the charge of being nervously unstable or even clearly hysterical. In the healthy, well poised person the religious experience is rarely so persistent that it cannot be controlled or completely inhibited. It lacks the dynamic of anger, of fear, and of sleep.

Thus on the whole religion does not conform to the criteria most commonly accepted and used for the discovery of innately determined behavior. Except for the vague possibility in its persistent nature, religion cannot be termed an instinct. If it be instinctive, it is strange that it cannot meet other criteria. It must then be fairly clear why most psychologists reject the instinct definition of religion.

The Drive Concept of Instincts.—But there is yet another conception of the nature of an instinct, the

dynamic conception. Among academic psychologists it is less widely accepted, perhaps because of its largely psychoanalytic origin, or possibly because of the greater vagueness of the conception. Still, it is only fair to give it consideration. From this dynamic point of view the individual human being is not thought of as a bundle of central nervous patterns awaiting stimulation. In fact the nervous patterns are not much thought about. Rather is the individual looked upon as a whole, and especially as a living, growing, peculiarly dynamic whole. All responses are thought of as manifesting a *vis a tergo*. It is the behavior of an individual in the process of overcoming stimuli rather than merely reacting to them. In place of the older and more troublesome term instinct this school of thought prefers to survey the life activity of human beings in the large, and to discover therein certain continuities which are called drives.² Upon the number of these there is no agreement and much divergence of opinion. The general tendency may, however, be characterized by grouping the drives into three;—the drive for power or wholeness, the drive for sexual satisfaction, and the drive for the continuation of comfortable living.

The drive for power or wholeness is the urge which is manifest in the generically human effort to succeed in something, to be superior to others in some way, to be powerful, to be a complete, whole and healthy human being. Anything which threatens to defeat this purpose or drive stirs those depressing feelings of inferiority so common and so influential in the molding of most in-

² Compare Gates, E. I., *Elementary Psychology*, Chap. 8 (Macmillan) and the author's *Principles of Abnormal Psychology*, pp. 210-212 (Holt).

dividual careers. There are few phases of life which are not influenced by it. Youth is notoriously a time of inferiority feelings, often well concealed from the unpenetrating eye, because in youth there is not only the vision of desired goals but also a painful awareness of individual limitations. Childhood also, and mature years, and old age as well, have their circumstances which aid or threaten this drive for power and wholeness.

The drive for sex knowledge and sexual satisfaction has been longer recognized and more often described. Certain aspects of the psychoanalytic movement have in recent years drawn attention to this phase of life and have possibly placed upon it, in the semi-popular literature at least, an exaggerated emphasis. Repugnant as much of this literature may be, one must not fail to recognize that there are many secondary, if not also tertiary and even quartanary, sex characteristics. In fact it must be recognized that very much of life is pervaded by the sex drive.

The drive for the continuation of comfortable living is not the old instinct of self preservation. That term is now rarely included in lists of instincts. It is omitted because there is little certainty of its meaning. Failure to satisfy this drive for comfortable living, or the imagined possibility of failure, immediately arouses fear. The drive has been described here not merely as an effort to maintain bare existence but as a drive for comfortable living. This means the achievement of food and clothing and shelter of course, but it also and more significantly means the achievement of a certain amount of education, of an income sufficient to provide

some luxuries, of the wherewithal to provide like facilities for loved ones, and of at least a comfortable working solution of the more annoying of life's problems. This means much more than a mere effort at self preservation. And it must be clear that whatever threatens the achievement of education, the continuation of the little luxuries, the comfort and happiness of loved ones, or even those solutions of life's problems that have been achieved, is that which will arouse fear, or worry, or anxiety and, so far as strength and ability permit, a renewal or intensification of the struggle to avoid such disaster.

Before considering the nature of religion in the light of these drive concepts, it will be wise to summarize their more outstanding characteristics. For one thing they are unconquerable, they are never obliterated. No matter what the age or state these drives are to be observed in one form or another. Furthermore they lack any one specific form of expression. A reflex is a fixed form of response and its presence or absence can in consequence be easily detected. But the drive lacks any one specific manifestation. It is discoverable only by observing the whole course of life, the general trends in human behavior. Perhaps the most distinguishing feature of all is the behavior of these drives under repression. An obstacle placed in the way of the drive has an effect like an obstacle placed in the way of a stream of water. The water is backed up at first and then breaks out through some new channel. If it cannot go directly ahead it continues toward the same goal although temporarily by another course. So with drives. Blocking them, repression is the more technical

term, does not annihilate but merely forces to some other mode of expression. The drive for power or wholeness is never crushed although its course may be altered; the sex drive is never stilled although the form of expression may be deviously changed; the drive for the continuation of comfortable living ceases only with death, although that which satisfies and that which is sought may change greatly from time to time and from one period of life to another.

Religion and the Drive Concept.—Does religion conform to this dynamic or drive concept of instinct? In many respects certainly. Although perhaps the conformity may be observed more clearly in the life of the race than in that of any given individual. The unconquerable nature of religion throughout history has been frequently observed by historians. Efforts to crush it have always been futile. The absence of anything fixed and specific in religion appears to be demonstrated by the confusion which has come out of the efforts to define its essential nature. Many of the forms of religion might be explained in terms of circumstances which repressed the religious drive and the ultimate breaking forth of this drive in some new mode or fashion. But the search for these characteristics in the course of the religious life of individuals is not rewarded with much that satisfies. Religion does seem to be conquerable in many individuals. At least, religion seems to drop out of the lives of some people quite completely. Mankind may be incurably religious but individual men most certainly are not, if we are to judge by conventional standards. And religion also appears in individuals to be repressible without that tendency to indirect or to

new modes of expression, which is the most salient characteristic of the drive.

Still it may be contended, and perhaps justifiably, that religion in individual lives does often partake of the characteristics of the drive. The many changes of form through which it passes with growth changes from childhood to youth and to maturity and to old age indicate a lack of any specificity of response. And the disappearance of religion from individual lives may be more apparent than real. When a man loses interest in religion so that he no longer participates in any form of religious exercise and freely avows his atheistic or even antitheistic beliefs, it may not be true that he is non-religious. That depends in turn upon the definition of religion, which, as has already been stated, is a matter of much difference of opinion. Perhaps the avowal of atheism or the antitheistic activity can be interpreted as an effort to hold his religious drive in repression. If so, then of course he is essentially far from being non-religious. If we were but sufficiently agreed upon what is to be recognized as religious, then we should be far better able to determine if the religious behavior of individuals is such as to conform to the drive concept of instinct.

This would leave one then in a rather absurd dilemma. One might apparently conclude that one cannot determine if religion be in its essence an instinct-drive until it is possible to define what is religious, and at the same time one cannot make a satisfactory definition of religion until its essential nature can be determined.

The way out must be that of declining to attempt an exact definition of religion, and in its place to accept

as a working basis the trend of all the definitions. In other words one must not at first attempt to define religion but to work with the common impression of that which is religious. Working thus it becomes clear that religion both does and does not manifest the characteristics of the drive theory of instinct. It cannot thus be immediately and finally added to the list of drives already given, but rather should religious behavior be examined to discover if it may not be motivated by one or more of these recognized drives. If religion be so motivated, then the reason for its similarity to a drive would be apparent. And the failure to find in religion the characteristics of a specific drive would also be explained.

It is not necessary to look far for evidences in religion of the drive for power or wholeness. Through religion man is supposed to be able to invoke higher powers to aid him in vanquishing his enemies, to eliminate disease from his body, and to achieve success in life. With the aid of an all-powerful God, feelings of inferiority disappear, or are minimized. Many of the religious concepts and ceremonies seem to imply the achievement of power and wholeness by some supernatural aid. It was pointed out that inferiority feelings are the reverse phase of this drive for power. The consciousness of such inferiority feelings has often been expressed in religious literature and liturgy. Worshipers assert that man is weak, wayward, insignificant when compared with other and mightier creations of God, a miserable sinner. The use of ashes, sackcloth, and of such ceremonies as groveling-in-the-dust, bowing, moaning, and wailing are all indicative of inferior-

ity feelings. Other examples will come at once to the mind of the reader familiar with the phenomena and thought of religion. These are enough to indicate that religious behavior may in some way be intimately related to the drive for power and wholeness.

That religious ceremonies and even the very essence of religion have been often attributed to the sex drive is doubtless already known to most readers. Certainly there is ample evidence of a close relationship between religion and the sex drive. The emphasis upon fatherhood and motherhood, virgin births, the very large place which the cradle and the love of children have had especially in the Christian religion, the struggle of the Hebrews with the phallic religions, and the phallic religions themselves,—all testify to the place of the sex drive in the life of religion without carrying the analysis into a consideration of the phallic symbolism and the sexual sublimations which the psychoanalysts claim to find even in much that is not commonly supposed to have any sexual significance.

The third of the drives listed, that for the continuation of comfortable living, has also a large, if not larger, place in the motivation of religion. Mankind manifests not only the drives for power and for physical reproduction, but also an equally urgent drive for comforts, for food, for luxuries, for knowledge, for peaceful living with all the powers of nature and with supernatural powers. He prays for his daily bread; he seeks for a continuation of life in a heaven from which all of his enemies are excluded; certain ceremonies are practised and beliefs accepted as an aid to that happy continuation of life; charms are relied upon to ward off evil in-

fluences; and through the theology of his sect is found working solution of many of the problems of life. The blessings of his God are sought for all loved ones and the anathemas of the Almighty for his enemies.

If these different drives have functioned so largely in the motivation of religious belief, thought and custom, the reasons are now clear for the similarity of religious behavior to that of the drives. But it also means that religion cannot be attributed to a single basic drive coördinate with the others, which is but another way of saying that religion cannot be reduced to an instinct even when instinct is thought of in terms of the drive concept. It is reducible in part, at least, to all three of these drives. Certain rather over-ardent analysts of human nature have sought to reduce all these drives to one fundamental drive. Even if that were achieved, it would not justify the assertion that religion is the expression of an instinct, but rather that religion, along with all other human behavior, would be thought of as one among many manifestations of that one fundamental drive or instinct. But the notion that all are derivations of one instinct is not widely accepted and is of dubious status, consequently it may for the present be wisely dismissed.

The effort to find the essence of religion in the expression of a fundamental and unique human drive has thus failed, although not quite so completely as the effort to reduce it to a mechanistically conceived instinct pattern. Religion does partake of the nature of a drive but it does so partake because all three of the known human drives have apparently been the motivation of many features of religion. So, while the instinct

theory of religion must be rejected,³ it is nevertheless evident that religion is related to that which is the essential nature of man, to the drives which are characteristic of man. The nature of that relationship will be developed in the chapters which follow.

³ Compare Coe, G. A., *Psychology of Religion*, Chap. 19. Chicago University Press, 1916. Pp. 365.

CHAPTER III

IS RELIGION AN EMOTION, AN ATTITUDE, OR A BELIEF?

The emotional features of religion have been forced to bear the burden of much praise and blame. Those who have sought to interpret religion and religions, as well as those who have dared to evaluate, have often concentrated upon the emotional factors. The intellectualist has condemned certain sects for being emotional. The emotionalist has condemned the intellectualist for being cold and unreligious, because of his apparent lack of religious emotion. Far too often satisfaction has been found in the glib and easy interpretation that religion is fundamentally an emotion. This, of course, with the implication that whatever is emotional is to be rejected and despised.

Religion as Emotion.—The emphasis upon the emotional aspect of religious behavior has doubtless been supported in part, perhaps unwittingly, by the distinction which psychologists gave some twenty years ago to the place of conversion in religion. Psychologists in the quest for understanding, and for something in the tantalizing but difficult field of religion which could be readily studied with profit, were quite naturally attracted to the phenomenon of conversion. It was frequent. All members of some sects were expected to have experienced it. Data on it could be easily col-

lected, tables of statistics could be produced and from the personal descriptions available something of its qualitative nature could be determined. The consequence was that psychologists brought conversion into the limelight of scientific thought and thus inevitably emphasized that which is in very large part at least an emotional experience.

Unfortunately those who have condemned religion for being merely an emotion, as well as those who have been satisfied by defining it as an emotion, have not always first made clear to themselves what an emotion is. Perhaps this has been in part due to the difficulty of arriving at a satisfactory definition of emotion. An emotion is something which every one knows by experience, but is strangely difficult to describe and to define. Conceptual terms here always seem inadequate. For this reason the poet's figurative expression of feelings is not infrequently turned to as the more satisfactory. But the poet's expressions cannot satisfy the psychologist.

Technically an emotion is always thought of as a highly complex state of mind. The effort has then been to determine what are the components of this complex state. One feature which is so necessary and obvious that it is often overlooked in description is the perception or the conception which is the center or core or carrier of the whole emotional state. In other words, one is always afraid of something, one is always made angry by something, and the something may either be actually present to the senses or it may be imagined. In addition there is the presence of the effect upon consciousness of a vast amount of physiological

activity, of changes in the patterns of muscle tension, of changes in heart action and respiration, of changes in the distribution of the blood through the body, of marked changes in the activity of the glands especially of those called ductless. Whether all this occurs before one is aware of an emotion, or as the consequence of the emotional state, has been much debated; but the debate need not detain us here because the temporal sequence is of minor importance in the study of religious behavior. It is, however, important to observe that this vast amount of physiological activity is somehow a very active if not essential part of the emotion, and has a very definite effect upon consciousness. Indeed it is quite possible that the qualitative difference between emotions, that which makes one emotion fear and another anger and the like, is this mass of physiological activity.¹ But there is yet another feature characteristic of every emotion which must not be omitted, and that is the feeling tone, its pleasantness or unpleasantness. Every emotion is experienced as being either characteristically agreeable or disagreeable. Just what the physical basis for this feature may be has not been definitely established, but it is present and to be recognized as an essential feature of the emotional experience.

All of these features appear at once to be present in the behavior of the individual experiencing religion. They may be observed in their more pronounced form in the meetings of those devotees whose methods are

¹ Dunlap, K. (Ed.), *The Emotions*, by C. G. Lange and Wm. James. Baltimore, Williams and Wilkins, 1922.

Cannon, W. B., *Bodily Changes in Pain, Hunger, Fear and Rage*. New York, Appleton, 1916.

such as to make the experience most intense. In such places the stimuli for the cognitive factor (perception or conception) are many. There is much talk about God, Jesus, the cross, the blood, heaven, hell, and the like. Or, there are pictures and statues and symbols which effect the same end. The blanched or flushed faces, the tense voices often uttering mere verbigerations or shouts or cries or screams or groans, the agitated movements of the muscles of the limbs and trunk which sometimes develop into jumping or rolling or into agitations so great as to resemble fits,—all are ample evidence of the physiological factors of emotion. That these states are always either pleasant or unpleasant can scarcely be doubted after reading the many descriptions which have been written by those who have experienced them.²

Thus without doubt the religious experience is emotional. Many people, however, have religious experiences which lack the extremes mentioned above. They may be so mild that the observer, even though trained, might fail to detect any overt indication of the emotional state. But this is equally true of the reaction of human beings to music. While some may be moved to tears by a given rendition, others may be affected without external manifestation. It is sometimes argued that the reaction to music may be a purely cognitive one, utterly without the feeling-emotion feature. And that is probably true. But if one reacts in a purely intellectual manner to religious pictures and religious

² For examples see St. Theresa's *Interior Castle*; and, also, the reports in questionnaire returns collected by E. D. Starbuck for his *Psychology of Religion*.

music and preaching and thoughts of God, it may be seriously questioned if that be a religious experience. It may be philosophizing or psychologizing or theologizing, but it is not an experience which is characteristically religious.

If one left the matter here, the inference would be that the religious experience is an emotion coördinate with other emotions and that whenever one makes a list of emotions religion must be included. Such a conclusion would, however, be dangerous. The listing of emotions is not easy. The effort has often been made but never with an entirely satisfactory result. Such efforts have made clear that there are many different terms which are supposed to designate different emotions, and that there is a common belief in the existence of many more emotional qualities than we have satisfactory words for in our dictionaries. Some have thought that there might not be more than two actual kinds of emotions, and that all others were gradations of these with such a difference in the pattern of accompanying ideas as to make them mistakable for entirely different emotions. Others have sought to make lists of the fundamental or original emotions³ and out of these to derive through experience or by combination the other or higher emotions and feelings. Thus the effort to place religious experience in a list of discrete emotions is confronted by all these obstacles.

Another difficulty arises from the observation that the emotional quality of religious experience differs from time to time in any one person, and from religion

³ McDougall, Wm., *Introduction to Social Psychology*; and Ribot, T., *Psychology of Emotion*.

to religion, if not also from sect to sect. Fear is a prominent quality with some, awe with others, while love and loyalty and submission and reverence are terms which yet others would use to describe the experience. Certainly these are in some instances so different in quality as to be antithetic. The religious experience cannot then be listed as one of the emotions. Apparently one must conclude that it is fear or awe or love or loyalty or submission or elation or reverence aroused by a religious situation. The religious experience is thus emotional, but there seems to be no peculiarly religious emotion. The thoughts which are in mind at the time, or some features of the objective situation in which it occurs, differentiate the experience from others and lead to its being described as religious. Perhaps there is a peculiar combination or sequence of emotions which only religious situations can arouse, but that can be determined only after much further analysis.

Religion as Attitude.—Much has been made by some authors of religion as an attitude.⁴ It is said that religion must in essence be psychologically conceived as an attitude, and that this attitude is the outgrowth of social activities and valuations. To say that religion is fundamentally an attitude toward life, toward the world in which we live, has its attractive features. The soundly and sincerely religious people of one's acquaintance do seem to have an attitude toward life, toward God, and toward their fellow men which is somehow different and peculiar. If there is no spe-

⁴ See Woodburne, A. S., *The Religious Attitude* (Macmillan, 1927); and compare with King, Irving, *The Development of Religion* (Macmillan, 1910); and also Pratt, J. B., *The Religious Consciousness* (Macmillan, 1920), Chap. 4.

cifically religious instinct and no peculiarly religious emotion perhaps here is the solution. The essence of religion may lie in an attitude.

But again one must not be hasty. Attitude is a tricky word. It has a meaningful sound and a familiar one, but it has caused much trouble in the history of psychology. While there have been many definitions of attitude the general tendency today is to think of it as a rather large and inclusive neuro-muscular pattern or set. One goes out on a bird walk, for example, with an attitude which makes one unusually responsive to every bird that crosses one's field of vision. But if the next day one takes a walk with a geology class the attitude is quite different and in consequence one is now exceptionally responsive to stones and earth structures instead. The attitude is thus a pattern of nervous preparation and of muscular set which conditions attention, which facilitates attention to that which corresponds to the attitude and prevents a ready attention response to whatever does not correspond.

The degree of consciousness accompanying the attitude, or the degree to which anyone is aware of the attitude which dominates, varies with the circumstances. Certain attitudes which have become well habituated have little accompanying awareness. The naturalist of long experience might no longer be aware of a bird-searching attitude when he goes for a walk, nor would the well trained geologist be aware of his geological attitude. But there are many attitudes of which all are quite well aware. There is the attitude that we are just about to say something; there is the depressing attitude that we have just forgotten what it was we

were going to say; there is the doubting attitude; and the attitude that the projected task will be difficult; and many more which will come to the mind of any reader. Of these we are as a rule quite clearly conscious although it be an awareness of the whole without consciousness of the many details which are fused into that whole.

It must be furthermore apparent that the attitude is the consequence of experience. If one knew nothing of birds, one could not have a bird-seeking attitude; if one had never had experience even remotely related to a certain project, one could scarcely have the attitude that such a project would be difficult. And the best established attitudes are the product of much experience of a particular kind.

Is religion then an attitude? Certainly there are religious attitudes. The religious fanatic manifests an attitude which plainly governs his attention. He thinks only of that which fits his little system and acts accordingly. The saintly man moves through life enduring patiently, inspiring all who come into contact with him, because of an attitude which governs his attention, his thought and his responses to the situations of life. The attitudes of the Mohammedan, the fetish worshiper and the Christian are conspicuously different and characteristic. There may be enough in common to them all to characterize them all as religious attitudes. But whatever may have been the racial origin of religion, the religious attitude as we know it must be the consequence of religious experience. Hence one must be cautious about defining religion as fundamentally an attitude lest one define religion in terms of that which is secondary.

Religion as Belief.—Finally, one must decide if religion can be satisfactorily defined as a belief. To do that it is necessary to recognize a distinction between belief and believing. The term belief is frequently used to designate a system of religious thinking, a theology, a set of doctrines concerning God and his relation to man. We say that we cannot tolerate one belief, or that we admire those who live by some other belief. Believing is, however, to be thought of as an attitude. The person who believes in the doctrine of evolution has a very different attitude or set aroused by the mention of that doctrine from that aroused in the person who has been trained to a disbelieving attitude. It is likewise possible for one person to have a believing attitude toward the doctrine of original sin and another to have the attitude of disbelief. One may thus believe a belief, or one may disbelieve a belief. The believing attitude is the converse of the attitudes called disbelief and doubt. The believing attitude is variously characterized as one of acceptance, of full adjustment to, even possibly including a touch of submission. Negatively it is said to lack any tendency to object or to consider conflicting ideas.

Both believing and belief must be essential features of religion. A religion is inconceivable without some conception of a god, or a higher power or a supernatural order of some sort. This is its belief, or a part of it. And if men go through life, or any considerable portion of it, with a religious attitude, then they must have accepted some sort of creed or religious belief, and therefore they have a believing attitude. The religious experience which has so far been presented merely as

some sort of emotional experience must in turn be dependent upon a believing attitude at least for its initiation. One who totally disbelieved all conceptions of god could not have a religious experience so long as that attitude of disbelief dominated. But if one believes in a god of any sort, then a religious experience is possible. So, both the belief and the believing attitude are factors in religion. But surely no one can adequately define religion in terms of the belief alone, nor in terms of the believing attitude alone, for that would leave out the specifically religious experience. Again, if religion be defined in terms of the religious experience, then would the belief and the believing be omitted, which would be equally absurd.

In the chapter just preceding, the relationship of religion to the drives of life was discussed. It is well now to observe that belief and believing are related to those drives, two of them at least. The quest for power is often satisfied by believing the doctrine, the belief, that there is an all-powerful God and that all of that power is supporting whoever so believes. War lords assure their vassals that God is fighting on their side. And if this be slightly modified by saying that God fights on the side of those who have the biggest guns, then the soldier must be made to believe that his side has the biggest guns. The obstacles to individual achievement of power in civil life are often overcome by the will to power reinforced by the believing attitude and the consciousness of divine assistance.

The drive for the continuation of comfortable living is constantly confronted by the facts of the world in which the man lives. Whence he came and whither he

is to go, why he is here at all, and what it is all for, and is it all worth while after all, are questions which frequently, very frequently, threaten the continuation of comfortable living for thinking men. Perhaps the higher the intelligence the higher the civilization and the greater the knowledge the more acute may these great problems of life become and the more seriously may they threaten man's peace of mind, that peace which all are seeking. A belief about the nature of the world in which man lives, which fits the facts as he knows them and offers him an acceptable interpretation, one which appeals to him as worth living by and worth offering to others, establishes an attitude of believing and helps enormously to satisfy the drive for the continuation of comfortable living. With such an attitude and such a belief a man can live comfortably in his world; without it he is groping, struggling, trying this and trying that, always seeking yet ever unsatisfied.

CHAPTER IV

A PSYCHOLOGICAL CONCEPTION OF RELIGION

In the preceding chapters the notion that religion is fundamentally an instinct was examined and found to have justification only in the fact that religious beliefs, experiences and institutions appear to have been greatly influenced by the fundamental drives of human nature. Religion, in other words, was found to have its roots in that which is generically human. The notion that religion is an emotion was examined with the conclusion that there is no single emotion which can be isolated and described as the religious emotion. But it was also concluded that the religious experience is fundamentally emotional in nature, although it may be a certain course or combination of emotions. The notion that religion is an attitude was likewise found to be inadequate. Religious attitudes exist, but they are the consequences of the specifically religious experience. In the present chapter a more adequate psychological view of religion is attempted.

Sources of Data.—It is necessary to recognize that the psychologist utilizes two large sources of data for his work. One of these is the directly observed behavior of the human being. It is through this direct study of the living human being that the experimental psychologist obtains his data, and it is pretty well known

that two different types of method for this work have been developed. These are the introspective and the objective methods.

The purely *introspective method* is used to discover the actual content and character of consciousness in any given experience. Although it is a very old method in experimental psychology, comparatively little exact data for the psychology of religion has been obtained by its use. Perhaps this is because of the duration and complexity of the religious experience which makes the application of the introspective method peculiarly difficult. Some years ago Girgensohn¹ sought to surmount these difficulties. He produced a huge volume in which may be found lengthy presentations of his analyses of states of consciousness aroused by presentations of religious material. These analyses present the ideational, the volitional, the sensory and the affective content of these experiences. But even Girgensohn, absorbed as he was in the problems of analysis, eventually recognized that in the analytical process something was lost. He realized that a description of the elements of which the religious consciousness is composed, although valuable in itself, did not give a complete description of the religious experience. A somewhat similar attempt has been made in this country under Starbuck's leadership. He first sought to distinguish among the different kinds of sensory experience those which were of a peculiarly "intimate" nature. In fact he has attempted to arrange the different senses according to a scale of degrees of intimacy. The most

¹ Girgensohn, Karl, *Der Seelische Aufbau des Religiösen Erlebens*. Leipzig, 1921. Pp. 712.

intimate are temperature, pain, equilibrium and the organic senses. Taste and smell and pressure and kinesthesia are fairly intimate, according to this conception, but rather approaching the middle of the scale. The least intimate of the senses are vision and audition. One of Starbuck's pupils² attempted to follow this out with a direct attack upon the content of consciousness in the religious experience. As his subjects were not trained in the use of the difficult method of introspection, he had them describe their religious experience as best they could and these descriptions were analyzed for evidences of the different elements of consciousness. He found that the "intimate senses," in which he includes the kinesthetic, are the prominent features of the God experience. Visual and auditory and tactual elements were found but these were far less prominent. Interesting and promising as such studies may be, the available data so far produced by them are so limited as to be all but insignificant.

More recently still a brilliant German theologian, Rudolf Otto, has attempted an introspective analysis of the religious consciousness which, although technically crude and unsatisfying, has nevertheless attracted much attention. He came to the conclusion that there is in the religious experience a conscious element peculiar and distinctive, which cannot be reduced to the other elements of consciousness. Its presence gives to the religious experience its characteristic quality. Otto has designated this as the "numinous" factor. Interesting as this announcement is, students familiar with the history of experimental psychology

² Mudge, E. L., *The God Experience*. Cincinnati, Caxton Press, 1923.

will recall that attempts have been made to establish the existence of elements peculiar to the act of willing and also to the consciousness of relationship, and they may fear that the numinous element is destined to as precarious a career as these others which also were presented as distinctive and peculiar. Perhaps a more thoroughgoing effort would reveal that the numinous is analyzable into simple forms of conscious experience.³

Of a cruder variety of introspective description, the literature of religion offers an abundance. From time immemorial people have been describing their religious experiences and in the last twenty years the questionnaire studies have stimulated many, who might not otherwise have thought of doing so, to attempt such descriptions. The consequence is that a vast amount of data of this rather autobiographical and psychologically inexact sort is available.⁴ The very bulk of this material, however, makes it valuable. Examination of it reveals the general trend of religious behavior, and also the nature of the emotions which appear in it.

Purely *objective methods* have so far produced comparatively little material of value. Here the techniques have in large part yet to be developed. Human beings may be subjected to maze running experiments, much like those used with rats, and the nature of their errors and their degrees of success be objectively recorded;

³ For an excellent criticism of Otto see Edward, Kenneth. *Religious Experience*, Chap. 3 (Edinburgh, Clark, 1926, Pp. 248).

⁴ Good collections of it may be found in the following—James, Wm., *Varieties of Religious Experience*, London, Longmans, 1902, Pp. 534; Pratt, J. B., *The Psychology of Religious Belief*, New York, Macmillan, 1907, Pp. 327; Pratt, J. B., *The Religious Consciousness*, New York, Macmillan, 1926, Pp. 488; Starbuck, E. D., *The Psychology of Religion*, London, Scott, 1905, Pp. 423.

but the experimental subjection of human beings to religious situations, in such a manner that an objective record of the reactions can be obtained is obviously a much more difficult task. Some methods, approximating those of the psychological test, are being developed,⁵ and the future may see much valuable data on the religious experience obtained by such methods, but up to the present they have contributed little.

In addition to these direct methods for the study of human behavior there is the second source of data for psychological work. This is to be found in the products of human behavior. It may be called the *institutional source*. Language, social customs, moral standards, political forms, art, clothing, systems of philosophy, methods of commerce,—all may be looked upon as vast human records. They are the institutionalized products of human reactions to the situations of life, and as such they are often indicative of the nature of those reactions. As such they are invaluable.

Much of what is commonly termed religious is behavior, or the record of behavior, in this institutionalized form. From this point of view the psychologist examines the theologies, the rituals, the lives of the saints, the modes of religious organization and the many forms of religious expression in art. The study of these is the means to a better understanding of the religious behavior of individual men. A study of the acts of a man, even though it be made long after he is dead, will reveal much concerning the experiences of that man while he was alive. Likewise can the study

⁵ Watson, G. B., *Experiments and Measurement in Religious Education*. New York. Association Press, 1927. Pp. 295.

of religious institutions reveal much concerning the religious experiences of those who gave birth to the institutions.

Differences of Definition.—It is out of the data which comes from all of these sources that the psychologist must form his conception of the nature of religion, and in phrasing his definition of religion he must keep both in mind. It cannot be said, however, that psychologists and the psychologically inclined have always done so. Many of the available definitions of religion reveal that some have preferred to define religion as essentially a matter of theology, of a form of belief. Some have phrased their definitions in terms of ceremonies and their effects; some definition makers seem concerned primarily with the ethical or the volitional aspects; while yet others have sought to define religion in terms of the conversion process, the emotional experiences of worship, or of the attitudes set up by religious experience.⁶

In all of these, some part or aspect of religious experience, or of its products, has aroused the interest of the author and almost exclusively absorbed his attention. To define religion in terms of theology is to take one part of that which has been here termed the institutional source of data for the psychology of religion and to make it the critical or essential feature of the whole. The same mistake is made if one defines religion

⁶ For collections of definitions see—Leuba, J. H., *A Psychological Study of Religion*, p. 339 et seq.; Hickman, F. S., *Introduction to the Psychology of Religion*, Chap. 2; Pratt, J. B., *The Religious Consciousness*, Chap. 1. For the definition of religion in terms of conversion see Hall, G. S., *Adolescence*, Chap. 14; and for definition in terms of attitude see Woodburne, A. S., *The Religious Attitude* (Macmillan).

in terms of religious forms and ceremonies. A corresponding error appears if one defines religion in terms of the ecstatic states of the saints, of camp-meeting conversion phenomena, or of adolescent experiences of religious insight. Here material from another source of data for psychological study, that of direct observation of experience, is treated with disregard for the products of that experience. It is just as inadequate for psychology to define religion in terms of conversion or of attitude as it is to define religion in terms of some of its institutional aspects. Theology or religious ceremony or religious organization without religious experience is as incomplete as religious experience without theology or religious ceremony or religious organization. A psychological definition of religion must include both the experiential and the institutional, and it must also include all that is religiously experiential and all that is religiously institutional.

All of this greatly simplifies the problem of definition. On the one hand religion involves certain portions of human behavior and on the other hand it includes all of the institutional products of that behavior. There remains only the determination of that feature which differentiates religious behavior from other kinds of behavior. This differentiating feature of religious behavior is the fact that it centers about belief in some form of concept of a god. Economic behavior and economic institutions are differentiated by their relationship to concepts of wealth; political behavior and institutions are differentiated by their relationship to concepts of government; and in like manner religious behavior and religious institutions are differentiated by

their relationship to belief in deity. In its briefest form then the term *religion may be defined as designating that behavior and those behavior products which are associated with a belief attitude toward some concept of a god or gods.* The psychology of religion would then be the study of all those forms of behavior which come under this definition. This would include an examination of the many forms of behavior related to such a belief, the examination of the belief attitude itself, and also a study of the different patterns or forms of the god concept.

The God Concept as an Essential.—In discussing this definition it is probably best to begin with the last item. Unless there is a concept of a god, or of gods, in some form, involved in the motivation, no behavior can be termed religious nor can any institution or behavior product. It may be social, or ethical, or artistic, or economic, or political, but it could never be religious. This is not slipping back into definition in terms of theology. It is merely saying that religion from the psychologist's point of view is a term which designates behavior related to belief in some concept of a god. That concept may be very crude, represented perhaps by a fetish carried about by some primitive man. Instead of a concept of one god there may be concepts of two or more gods serving as the center of the religious belief. The concept may be polytheistic or monotheistic or pantheistic. It may be the Allah of the Mohammedans or the Yahweh of the Hebrews or the God of the Christians, trinitarian or unitarian. It may be a very detailed and anthropomorphic concept, or it may be the vaguest notion of some sort of cosmic background and

support of human values and aspirations.⁷ It is essential merely that the behavior considered be related to belief in some god concept in order to justify its classification as religious.⁸

Importance of Belief.—The term belief used in the definition must not be lightly passed by. The presence of a god concept in a human mind does not mean that any of the behavior of that individual is religious. A person may know about the concept of god but there must be the belief attitude toward that concept to engender religious behavior. Mere knowledge of god concepts does not make religious experience nor religious behavior any more than a knowledge of ethical standards makes moral conduct. Again, this is not defining religion in terms of the religious attitude, as some have done; rather is it a recognition of this belief attitude as one of the essential features of that behavior which may properly be called religious. The remainder of the definition requires little amplification. No apology need be made for the use of the term behavior. It does not mean behaviorism, as has been pointed out

⁷ For a recent statement of this see G. B. Smith's *Current Christian Thinking*, Chap. 9 (University of Chicago Press, 1928). The author concludes this discussion by saying that "men may believe in God without being able to define God" (p. 170). This does not mean to the psychologist the absence of a concept of God any more than inability to define relativity indicates the absence of a concept.

⁸ It may at times be very difficult to decide if a given form of behavior should be classed as religious or as motivated by belief in the virtue of a cause. Activity directed toward the elimination of child labor abuses obviously centers about belief in a cause and would not be religious. But an active movement for the propagation of atheism is less easily classified, because it may center about a belief which strictly speaking is a belief in a god although such a designation may be carefully avoided by its advocates. For a curious presentation of this problem see Chap. 20 of C. W. Ferguson's *The Confusion of Tongues* (Doubleday, 1928).

in an earlier chapter. It is worthy of emphasis, however, that this use of the term behavior conveniently covers all of those features which have been stressed by the studies of conversion, of prayer, of worship, of religious meditation, of religiously motivated conduct. And the term behavior products designates all that others have studied in the psychology of theology, of religious art, of ritual, and of the church as an institution. These, too, in order to come within the scope of the definition must be related to a belief in a god otherwise they cannot be thought of by the psychologist as religious behavior products.

Stimuli and Religious Behavior.—Defining religion in such terms quite naturally raises the question of stimuli for such behavior. It has become customary to think of behavior as the reaction to stimuli. While much behavior is incontestably in response to stimuli, there is the danger of thinking that the creature which responds is purely a passive one. The very reverse is the truth. In place of the simple notion of a passive creature reacting to environmental stimuli it is necessary to think in the more complicated fashion of a very dynamic active creature in conflict with an environment which stimulates.⁹ Aside from the possibility of direct revelation and the direct supernatural influence of God upon man, religious behavior and the belief in God is the product of this conflict. An extensive literature has been produced on the problem of the origin of religion,¹⁰ but the exact nature of the original

⁹ This point of view is admirably presented in L. L. Thurstone's *The Nature of Intelligence*. New York, Harcourt, 1924. Pp. 167.

¹⁰ An introduction to this literature may be had through the following—Ames, E. S., *The Psychology of Religious Experience*, Boston,

form of religion need not be of immediate concern. It undoubtedly came long before the dawn of history and so must inevitably be determined upon largely by speculation. What is of significance in the present is that whatever the form of religion examined, be it primitive or cultured, ancient or modern, it manifests the efforts of mankind to solve the conflict between himself and his environment. There are always on the one hand human beings who can think, who can use abstractions, and who are also motivated by urges or drives, who are dynamic not passive. On the other hand is the order of nature, with all its obstacles to be overcome if man is to understand even vaguely his place in it all and if man is to satisfy even temporarily and partially the drives which forever burgeon in his life.

The most important result of this conflict is the appearance of the god concept. Perhaps this had its beginning in very simple forms of animism or even in something yet more vague,¹¹ but even these are evidence of attempts, however crude, to explain and to understand. The vagueness of the concept is of little moment. Some of the early Christian thinkers found that they could best define God by negation, by stating what God was not; and there are many educated Christians

Houghton, 1910, Pp. 427; Campbell, I. G., "Manaism: A Study in the Psychology of Religion," *American Journal of Psychology*, 1918, 29, 1-49; Fraser, J. G., *The Golden Bough*; Jastrow, Morris, *The Study of Religion*, Chap. 4, London, Scott, 1908, Pp. 451; King, Irving, *The Development of Religion*, New York, Macmillan, 1910, Pp. xxii, 371; Leuba, J. H., *A Psychological Study of Religion*, New York, Macmillan, 1912, Pp. xiv, 371.

¹¹ See Marett, R. R., *The Threshold of Religion*, London, Methuen, 1909; and also Campbell, I. G., "Manaism; A Study in the Psychology of Religion," *American Journal of Psychology*, 1918, 29, 1-49.

today who find enduring satisfaction in their faith untroubled by the vagueness of their concept of God.

Effects of Belief.—The acceptance of some form of god concept as explanatory means the establishment of that belief attitude described above.¹² The achievement of belief in a god which permeates and motivates all nature, which is immanent or transcendent or both at once, a god which is the first cause and the present cause of the created universe and its processes, is an achievement likely to involve no little emotion. This emotional experience may be in part, or predominantly, that of relief through the arrival at an explanation which satisfies, the truth has at last been discovered or revealed. The superhuman power of this god, now accepted as an objective reality, stirs feelings of inferiority or of fear, perhaps both together, or even possibly in sequence, as different aspects of the god concept are considered. The greatness and omnipotence of the god believed in may stimulate curiosity and the complex emotional experiences called wonder and awe and admiration. The satisfaction and the relief may in turn lead to kindly efforts to make others aware of the belief or the discovery, with accompanying feelings of tenderness for those in distress. Their troubles are now attributed to their ignorance of this god and the lack of that belief which brings "peace to the homes of the brethren."

Whatever the quality of the emotional behavior aroused, or of its sequence of qualities, there is to be observed the appearance of certain forms of directly

¹² For a presentation of the origin and growth of this attitude see Irving King's *The Development of Religion* (Macmillan).

related overt behavior. Images or symbols of the god are set up. Places sacred to the god are determined, places where somehow this god and mankind come into closer contact. The reverence felt motivates those actions called worship. Ceremonies and rituals of worship grow from these crude beginnings. Often they are adaptations of older social customs.¹³ But the problems of living persist and soon reveal inadequacies in the concept or concepts believed. The result is the appearance of alterations and additions. New discoveries or revelations are reported. The recordings of these, the discussion and amplifications of them, constitute the theologies. Exceptionally moving incidents in the lives of great religious discoverers, or religious geniuses, or great devotees, are expressed in art. The lives and sayings of the saints are written down for inspiration to more certain belief.

So in the eyes of the psychologist religion is that vast department or field of human experience and its products which is related to belief in some concept of a god. Theology, art, ceremony, ritual, worship, and the records of the acts of the lives of the religiously motivated, as well as the cognitive and emotional phases of the religious experience itself, are all parts or phases or effects of religious behavior.

¹³ For elaborate presentations consult Cooke, A. W., *Sacraments and Society* (Badger); and Fraser, J. G., *The Golden Bough* (Macmillan).

CHAPTER V

THE RELIGIOUS SENTIMENT AND THE RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

There exists in many, if not most, people an acquired disposition toward the religious experience. Recognition of this fact will aid greatly in the interpretation of individual instances of religious behavior. It is customary to classify and to speak of this religious disposition as a religious sentiment, but in so doing it must not be confused with that religious attitude described in the preceding chapters. The religious attitude may be thought of as an habitual set of the human being effective in all the contacts of life. The person who has had much scientific training is said to have a characteristic attitude toward all situations that arise. He may also have a sentiment for some particular science or hypothesis. So, too, the devout person has a characteristic attitude which underlies and conditions all reactions to the events of life. This attitude, it will be observed, is a set which influences the response to any contact of life. The religious sentiment, however, is active and effective only in the presence of that which is religious. Bibles, churches, rituals, religious symbols, creeds,—all items in fact which are perceived as related to the belief in God may activate the religious sentiment.

Nature of a Sentiment.—It should be observed further that the term sentiment is used by psychologists

to designate a meaning quite different from the popular significance of the term. It may be well to consider an example of its technical use. A person may, for instance, join a particular club. Hitherto he may have had little knowledge of and scant interest in that club. Months and years pass during which he gives much time and thought to its affairs. As a consequence, whenever his club is mentioned he responds at once with marked feeling, and this feeling is quite complex. There may be in it a touch of fear for its good name, a dash of tender emotion over its benefits to himself, and a bit of anger toward its critics. The experience of the months and the years has built in this man a disposition toward the arousal of a certain group or pattern of emotions whenever thoughts or perceptions of this club appear in consciousness. The relative intensity of the different emotions in the pattern may vary from time to time with the aspect of the club and its affairs which happens to be uppermost. Furthermore, this disposition concerns his club and may be aroused only by his club. This club is the object around which, or in response to which, this disposition has developed.

Suppose again that, because of some unfortunate series of incidents, this man should be alienated from his club, and there should be months and years of active opposition to it. Now it will be found that the effect of these new and often repeated experiences is the production of a new disposition, one which arouses a very different pattern of emotions from that of its predecessor. There may be some of the same emotional factors involved, but others will most certainly be changed. Behavior toward every aspect of

that club will now be very different from what it was when behavior was governed by the first disposition, and the quality of the accompanying emotion, or emotion complex, will be very different because of the different factors involved. It is this disposition born of many experiences with a certain object and tending to the arousal of a certain pattern or combination of emotions that is today termed a sentiment.

The Love Sentiment.—Before attempting to think of religious behavior as determined by a religious sentiment it will be found most profitable to examine a sentiment closely allied to religion and very similar to the religious sentiment, that of love. Far the best presentation of this has been made by William McDougall ¹ and it is his scheme of thought that will be followed here.

Love in McDougall's thinking is not to be confounded with that primary impulse or instinctive tendency to care for the young, the small, the weak and the suffering. The inner or conscious phase of this is that tender feeling or emotion which we all know so well. Nor is love to be confounded with the reproductive instinct, with its feeling or emotional accompaniment well designated by the term lust, so different in quality from the tender emotion of the protective impulse. Love is to be thought of as a sentiment involving to a greater or less degree each of the following:—fear, anger, wonder, self-subjection (inferiority feeling), self-assertion (elation), and the tender emotion.

The test of this analysis may be easily made. Examine the behavior of the hero of any well developed

¹ McDougall, Wm., *Social Psychology* (Luce), Chap. 5.

romance and it will be seen that in the response to the object loved all these factors have their part, according to the situation or momentary circumstances of the loved one. The lover's timid, fearful, hesitations seem often to be the most conspicuous aspect of his behavior; again his anger at himself or over interference by others is most evident; the feeling of wonder aroused by talents and qualities perceived or imagined in the loved one no romanticist of the older school ever failed to include; feelings of inferiority seem frequently allied to his fear; self assertion and elation to the point of showing off in her presence usually play their part; and tender emotion, the desire to protect her through life from the troubles of this world, is always conspicuously present. The outsider may see but one of these emotion units manifested at a given time, and the romanticist may be able to describe but one. The others are there, however, in greater or less degree, as is proved by the ease with which the hero shifts from fear to anger, to feelings of wonder and then of inferiority, to self assertion and the protective tender emotion and back again, now to one and now to another as one and another aspect of the loved one is considered. The plot of most romances is the tale of the forming of the love sentiment.

It is worthy of more than passing note that the above analysis does not include even a mention of the reproductive instinct. There are undoubtedly love sentiments in which the sex instinct is an important factor, but there are just as certainly love sentiments in which the sex instinct is entirely absent. In fact, there are a great variety of love sentiments which lack the sex element. We sometimes call them love, wishing for a

better or more distinguishing term. Sometimes we prefer the words liking for, affection for, tenderness toward. It is a pity that our vocabulary does not supply a greater variety of terms with which to designate these qualitative differences. The love of a man for his wife and the love of the same man for his child are certainly different, conditioned by a different sentiment, although they undoubtedly have many factors in common. The love of a pupil for a venerable teacher and the love of a missionary for his converts, although both are commonly designated by the same term, are obviously different sentiments, and all of them as obviously lacking any trace of the sex instinct. These sentiments are different because of the difference in the degree or readiness with which the various instinct-emotion factors participate in the whole. Perhaps some day psychology will be able to give an exact analysis of these sentiments; but, for the present, it can only point out the probabilities. Every one may, however, study his own sentiment experiences and attempt to determine, if he will, what factors are involved in each.

Such an analysis as this throws much light upon the long vexing problem of the origin of love and its forms. It is a current doctrine that all love forms, even philanthropic love and the love of God, are derived by a sort of evolutionary process from the primitive sex instinct with its lustful emotional accompaniment. The modern novel and some would-be literary critics have done much to disseminate this notion. It is attractive to those who are prone to think of all things as evolved from some single original form. They seem to forget, however, that the doctrine of evolution requires the

earlier or primitive forms to be more general, less differentiated and specialized. The sex instinct seems to be very specific, too specific in fact to be the parent of the many love forms we now know. It would be easier to think of the sex instinct along with the others as being differentiated forms of some urge or tendency of a more general nature. Whatever the history may have been in the race, in the individual today the sex instinct in its specific form does not appear until some years after birth. The Freudian notion of infantile sexuality even is that of something far more vague and generalized. The child comes into the world apparently endowed with something which brings about in the course of his development certain central patterns which we know as the instinct-emotion units of behavior. There is no evidence that in the individual's life history the one love form is evolved out of another, although one may develop later than another. The notion of love sentiments as acquired dispositions to certain instinct-emotion syntheses or patterns far better fits the facts as we know them. There is a love sentiment developed for the father, another for the mother, later on one for the school attended, others for friends, for teachers, for wife or husband, for children, for causes, for institutions. All come normally in the course of time and according to the individual's peculiar type of experience.

The Religious Sentiment.—In like manner, much experience with a believed-in concept of a god and its attendant emotions will eventuate in the establishment of a religious sentiment. Any object or situation or thought which arouses the thought of God will thereafter arouse

the associated pattern of emotional experience because of this sentiment. At least, there will be a tendency toward such an arousal even though it be temporarily blocked by responses to other thoughts or situations.

Before examining the details of this it will be well to bring to mind the experience of a person attending an effectively religious service in a beautiful church. It is necessary to assume that this imaginary person is religiously responsive; the other kind will be considered in subsequent chapters. Upon entering the church or cathedral such a religiously minded person will experience a feeling which he might at first call awe.² The architecture, the lighting, the decoration, the subdued tones of the great organ and some vague half-conscious associations arouse this awe experience. If he should turn psychologist for a moment and examine himself, he would find that this awe is not simple, but that it is a fusion of at least three simple emotions. There is in it more than a touch of wonder. The instinct of curiosity or inquiry with its impulse toward increased experience is aroused by the distances, the fan tracery, the stained glass, the fleeting glimpses of dimly lighted alcoves, and the alluring tones of the half located organ.

But there is much more than wonder. In the presence of such grandeur the individual feels insignificant, inferior. The impulse is to be quiet, subdued. Voices are suppressed to whispers. The negative self feeling adds its color to the emotional whole. If these two were all that were experienced the complex would be admiration, wonder plus inferiority; but they are not all. It has been assumed that this church visitor is a

² Here McDougall's analysis of complex emotions is tentatively used.

religiously minded person; and so there would most certainly be thoughts of God in his mind upon entering the house of God. In the architecture, in the decorations and in the furnishings, there may be much to remind him of the fact that he is in the house of God. Such thoughts would also stir inferiority feelings and would also add to his emotional complex something of the fear quality. While it is evident that there is less emphasis today than formerly among Christian peoples upon the fear arousing aspects of God, still the available descriptions of religious experience do not indicate its entire disappearance. Thoughts of God may by association arouse consciousness of personal delinquencies and thus indirectly stimulate the fear factor. This combination, wonder with inferiority and fear, again produces not the typical religious experience but merely awe. Perhaps it is all that many experience in church attendance. Christianity has, however, emphasized the concept of love in its thought and life. No Christian can think of God without being conscious at once not only of his omnipotence but also of that most beautiful teaching, God is love. People who love us, and acts of love toward us, arouse in us the tender emotion. So our imagined visitor will because of his Christian thoughts of God have in the complex of emotion experienced a considerable infusion of tenderness. All these combined, wonder and inferiority and fear and tenderness, produce that complicated emotional pattern which McDougall terms reverence.

If this hypothetical visitor remains through a religious service, he will find that every item of the ceremony, every movement made, every word uttered,

every hymn sung, is designed to arouse these several factors of reverence. The dilations upon the greatness of God, the assertions of his all-pervasive presence, and the denunciations of sin as hateful to an avenging God would all arouse wonder, inferiority, and fear. The constant proclamation of the goodness of God, his loving kindness, his forgiving spirit, and his watchful care for all his children would arouse the tender emotion. So would the religious service, together with the building itself, stir in the attendant those emotions which, when aroused together, fuse into reverence.³

Relation of Reverence to Religious Sentiment.—

But the occasional experience of reverence does not make one religious. The reverence emotional pattern may be aroused occasionally in a very unreligious man. So, too, may reverence occur in the life of a religious man quite apart from that which is ordinarily called religious. The younger man in any profession when confronted by the older distinguished man of the same profession who is great, successful, powerful and beneficent will experience that very complex of emotions (wonder, inferiority, fear and tenderness) which we are here thinking of as reverence. Probably the younger man would say that he revered the older. Out of much experience of this kind the younger man may have developed in him a sentiment which is activated by the sight of or the thought of or by anything related

³ For detailed analyses which reveal in a more technical manner these factors of the religious experience, see Starbuck, E. D., *Psychology of Religion*; and Girgensohn, Karl, *Der Seelische Aufbau des Religiösen Erlebens*. The reader will also do well to consult a recent and widely influential work by a theologian who has also recognized these emotional factors in the religious experience. See Otto, R., *The Idea of the Holy* (Oxford Press), Chaps. 3, 4, 5, 6.

to the older. This might be called a reverence sentiment, but it is likely that the young man might have become conscious of other emotional factors entering in, or of some shift in the pattern, so that he might consider reverence as a rather inappropriate term. If so, it is likely that the sentiment developed may be more of the order of a love sentiment. Certainly no one would term such a sentiment religious, nor say that the young man was religious because he had experienced reverence and had developed a sentiment.

Many experiences of reverence aroused by religious situations may, however, eventuate in the establishment of a religious sentiment. The religious man, then, is one who has a religious sentiment. And this religious sentiment is one which is activated by consciousness of the presence of God, by thoughts about God, by any symbol of God, or by anything which is perceived as related to God.⁴

The love sentiment described above was the consequence of much experience with the loved object. That loved object did not at first arouse the love combination of emotions. Gradually this combination came into being and gradually the disposition became established. So with the religious sentiment. There is at first but the fleeting experience of reverence and only after much experience does the religious disposition grow. The child does not at first have a religious sentiment, although it might under a proper combination of circumstances experience reverence. The religious senti-

⁴ For a similar presentation of the religious sentiment see Wright, W. K., "On Certain Aspects of the Religious Sentiment," *Journal of Religion*, 1924, 4, 449-463; and also Kenneth Edward's *Religious Experience*, Chap. 4 (T. & T. Clark).

ment is this more or less permanent disposition to experience the reverential combination as the consequence of reverential experience with the consciousness of God. Religious education it might be called. If there is any possibility whatsoever of the inheritance of racial experience, and the subject of inheritance of acquired characters is far from being settled, then it may be that there is some inherited tendency to the development of a religious sentiment because the race has so long experienced religion. If so, its presence in each individual makes the work involved in the development of the sentiment so much easier. Perhaps the ease with which some have been able to establish the sentiment has led to the notion that religion was instinctive. We have seen the fallacy in classifying religion as instinctive; but because we are still so much in the dark over the problem of inherent tendencies, anyone is at liberty to hold any theory he may prefer concerning an innate predisposition to the development of a religious sentiment.

Comparison of Love Sentiment with Religious Sentiment.—Love and religion are so often allied in our religious thought, and because they have been presented together, it may be instructive to consider the following tabular comparison of the two sentiments:

<i>Love sentiment</i> <i>arouses—</i>	<i>Religious sentiment</i> <i>arouses—</i>
Wonder	Wonder
Inferiority	Inferiority
Fear	Fear
Tender emotion	Tender emotion
Self-assertion (elation)	
Anger	

Two differences are immediately evident, differences which would make the quality of the two experience groups noticeably distinct. Yet it is also clear why love and religion are so often confused. If the self assertion and anger factors were but weakly aroused by any given love sentiment, then the similarity to religious feeling might permit any difference to pass unnoticed. If, again, the religious sentiment had the addition of some tendency to arouse self assertion, as in some persons it possibly does, then also would the two experiences approximate each other in quality.⁵ That there are variations of each from individual to individual has already been sufficiently indicated. It is important here merely to note the possibility of fundamental differences between the two.

It may be freely granted that often certain religious sentiments and certain love sentiments, in the group or pattern of emotions they activate, are so much alike that distinctions are impossible. And it may be further granted that there are individuals whose religious experiences have been of so peculiar a nature that they actually do love God in the same way that one human being loves another. Such individuals seem, however, to be the exception rather than the rule. In the ordinary conduct of life it would appear to be the truth that the pattern of emotions aroused by the love sentiment differs conspicuously, both in qualities and

⁵ Stratton has shown that anger was probably a factor in some primitive forms of religious experience, but that the tendency of religious evolution is towards its elimination. In higher religions, anger is ancillary, aroused by opposition and interference, and not an essential feature of the religious experience. (Stratton, G. M., *Anger; Its Religious and Moral Significance*. New York, Macmillan, 1923.) Perhaps a similar argument could be written for the place of anger in love.

in proportional intensities, from that pattern aroused by the religious sentiment.

In describing the list of emotions aroused by many romantic love sentiments, it would be necessary to include lust. While there have been, and may possibly still be religious cults in which lust was a characteristic feature, these are scarcely typical of religion. In this feature alone most religious sentiments would differ from many love sentiments. Furthermore, the religious sentiment and the love sentiment differ in that to which they are responsive. The love sentiment grows as the consequence of certain emotional experiences between two human beings. The love sentiment is aroused by the perception of a human being, by thoughts of that person, or by the perception or thought of what may be somehow related to that person. But the religious sentiment is not aroused by a human being, and in practically all adults it is not aroused by a concept which very closely approximates the concept of a human being. Those who believe in a personal God would smile, as a rule, at anyone who thought of God in the form and proportions of a man. The god concept, while it may include human attributes, differs from the concept of a human being in some essential features of its meaning. It is this concept when accompanied by the belief attitude which stimulates the religious sentiment.

There is yet the probability of still another difference between these two sentiments. There seems to be a very characteristic sequence or pattern course of emotional qualities in the religious experience. As has already been suggested, and as will be seen again and

again in succeeding chapters, the emotions of the religious experience apparently follow a course from wonder and inferiority through fear to tender emotion. Certainly the typically Christian religious experience concludes with the tenderness quality dominant, even though the order of the preceding emotions may vary. It is difficult to think of love as following any such sequence.

In terms of the religious sentiment, the problem of religious differences assumes a new aspect. Such differences would be very difficult of explanation if there were a specific religious instinct. Just as there may be many kinds of love through differences in the degree to which the different emotional factors participate, so there may be many varieties of religious experience and consequently of religious sentiments. If fear happens, because of certain peculiarities of individual experience, to bulk larger in the religious life and sentiment of one person than another, then his religious experience is certain to be quite different from that of the person in whom the tender emotion is the dominant factor. Certain primitive peoples seem to have fear, inferiority and wonder as the dominant factors, while tender emotion is today usually the salient element in the Christian religious experience. Fear must certainly have been a more conspicuous factor in the religious sentiment when hell and eternal punishment were more energetically preached than they are now. So different are our individual experiences with religious forms and institutions, so different must be our religious sentiments. Some there are who could not recognize as religious an emotional experience

which was not highly colored by fear, others could not recognize it as religious unless there was in it much of the tender emotion, still others could not unless the feeling of inferiority was most intense. So, one sect emphasizes that which stirs primarily fear, another that which stirs primarily the tender emotion, and still another that which makes one feel how insignificant is man.

Comparison of the religious sentiment with the love sentiment is profitable in yet another way. Such emotional patterns dependent upon a sentiment disposition are just as likely to ebb and flow as any complex emotion without a disposition. Admiration, awe, and horrible fascination are neither permanent nor of long duration. No one expects them to be, and few wish them to be. Their fleeting nature causes no distress. Those who have had long experience with the love sentiment know equally well that love ebbs and flows. One is not perpetually dominated by love. The boy or girl to whom romantic love is new are sometimes distressed by the discovery of the ebb and flow of love, that it is sometimes completely displaced by the feelings aroused by the business of life. Older heads are not distressed by such temporary changes. But they are sometimes distressed by the ebb and flow of religious feeling. When, however, religious feeling is thought of as dependent upon a sentiment as is love, then it will be seen that the ebb is not to be feared. The ebb tide does not mean obliteration. The sentiment disposition remains and can later be successfully aroused again. It is only the fading out of the sentiment disposition which is to be feared by those who realize the value to

life of religious experience. So long as the sentiment remains, renewed religious experience may be aroused by religious appeals; but without it, only a passing reverence may be stirred and that with great difficulty.

The recognition of this similarity between the love sentiment and the religious sentiment makes possible an explanation of the frequently reported, and more often alleged, relationship between religious experience and the sex instinct. Reports are persistently current of sexual excesses accompanying religious revivals. Religion has frequently been presented as a sort of evolved form of love,⁶ and the notion that love is a secondary manifestation of the sex instinct was current long before the psychoanalysts made it popular. Students of the great religious mystics often interpret those notable religious ecstasies as perverted or disguised forms of sexual activity.⁷ The frequent use of the language of love and courtship and marriage in the description of spiritual experience is also pointed to as evidence of a sexual root or drive.

If one thinks in terms of sentiments and is willing to accept the indications of much similarity between the love sentiment and the religious sentiment, at least in the pattern of emotions aroused, a very different explanation of these evidences of sexuality in religion becomes possible. One may grant for the time being that sexual excesses do sometimes occur as by-products of religious excitement. One needs then to assume only

⁶ Hall, G. S., *Adolescence*, Chap. 11.

⁷ For presentations of this point of view see J. H. Leuba's *Psychology of Religious Mysticism*.

that the individuals involved have already had established in them a love sentiment which involves the arousal of the sex instinct or drive. The religious experience when aroused in such people would be weaker and less likely to dominate, especially in competition with a much better established sentiment. A slight arousal of the religious pattern might because of the similarity to the well established love pattern set off the easily aroused love pattern, and if this included a strong activation of lust then the sexual excesses reported would be the natural consequence. It is quite possible also that people who are nervously unstable might be more subject to such compound reactions.

The interpretation of the experiences of the mystics as of a sexual nature because of the love language used would be scarcely sound.⁸ The profound religious experiences of the mystics are doubtless very difficult of description. Any peculiar emotional experience rather baffles description. Anyone who has tried to express his reaction to Niagara, the ocean or the Grand Canyon knows this very well. In the effort to describe, the similarity of the religious experience to the love experience would soon be observed and so the language of love be called to mind. Such is a simple and very possible explanation for much of the allegedly sexual language of the mystics.

It has been long asserted that religion is at its best where love is purest. "He prayeth best who loveth

⁸ There is no implication to be read here that Leuba or anyone else has depended wholly upon the love language, although that has been used as one of the evidences. A more elaborate discussion of mysticism follows in a later chapter.

best," and so on. Put in the reverse fashion it would be that, if the love sentiments of the individual are not such as to arouse lust habitually, then the danger of the religious experience slipping over into a lustful love would be slight.

CHAPTER VI

RELIGIOUS EXPRESSIONS

The expression of emotions is a very old psychological concept. It was formerly thought that an emotion was some sort of disturbance of the mind which subsequently found expression through the voluntary musculature of the face and the body and the limbs. Today the changes in the patterns of muscle tension are considered essential parts of the emotional experience, along with the activities of the ductless glands, and the alterations of function in the heart, and circulatory, and digestive systems. They are as much a part of the whole emotional experience as are any of the contents of consciousness at the time. For the true expression of an emotion it is necessary to look beyond these into the activities and products of life. Emotions are expressed in deeds, good and bad, in loyalty, in perseverance, in the labor which realizes a dream, in the production of literature, of music, of any form of art.

So, in discussing the expression of religious emotions, attention must be concerned with something quite other than facial expressions and bodily attitudes. It must be occupied with the records and customs and institutions and systems of thought and works of art which have been motivated by the religious experience.¹

¹ Many readers will find it instructive to compare the following presentation to the expressions of religious emotion with that of Rudolf Otto in his work entitled *The Idea of the Holy* (Oxford Press), Chap. 9.

The experience of wonder and curiosity leads to investigation, to thought, and hence to increased knowledge. The great progress of mankind in scientific knowledge has been in large part motivated by wonder and curiosity. The person who knows most for his degree of intelligence is the person who has been most curious. But it should be observed that curiosity does not necessarily lead men into the laboratory, nor inevitably to the unknown wilderness for exploration and discovery. Much knowledge can be obtained by merely thinking. Newton thought out a possible solution of the problem of the movement of the moon, and then turned over much of the task of its verification to assistants. Logical systems of thought which will fit the known facts of life are quite as much sought for as the facts themselves. Put in more technical psychological terms it would be that man has an abundance of perceptual experience. This arouses curiosity and wonder, as a consequence of which man seeks to devise a conceptual system according to which the succession of perceptual experiences will no longer appear accidental and fortuitous, but will have a meaningful, an orderly, relationship.

The Intellectual Expressions of Religion.—It will be recalled that wonder was one of the factors in the religious experience. This alone might be sufficient motivation for man to seek some system of thought which would explain his religious perceptions and feelings. But it is also true that the subjective experiences of life have been quite as effective in arousing the curiosity of man as have the objective. The stars early aroused curiosity and efforts at explanation, but so did

dreams. Some have thought that dreams first gave rise to the notion of a soul. So it may be wisely assumed that the religious experiences themselves were also sources of wonder and of efforts to explain. As religious experiences are so intimately related to a concept of a god, then would arise the problem of the nature of that god, and still more acutely the problems concerning the relationship of god to man.

Thus the theological systems, which have been slowly worked out and developed, may properly be thought of as expressions of the religious experience. They can properly be classified as the intellectual expression of religion. If, it should be added, there is in the world's vast supply of theology aught which has been miraculously revealed by God directly to man, and the writer is far from denying the possibility of such a revelation, then to that portion of theology this discussion cannot of course apply. But such revelations would also serve to arouse both the religious experience and further efforts at systematic thinking, hence more theology. Man has made a great variety of theologies and spent much time and energy in the effort to improve them, and also to prove all but one system false. But for the dynamic of religious feeling, such theologizing would never have been; or, at most, it would have been on a much smaller scale.

This theological or intellectual expression of religious experience has often been condemned as inadequate. Of course it is inadequate. Every effort is foredoomed to inadequacy which seeks to express in the cold forms of concept and logical relationship that which is in essence a human feeling. Compare again with love.

If one were to sit down in cold blood and attempt to write out his love for his mother or his children in a series of formal statements logically arranged, that person and all the world would say that the result was but a poor approximation to the richness of a love experience. The world of logical conceptual thought is a world so different from the world of emotion there can never be an adequate representation of one in the other. It is in the nature of man, however, to crave such conceptual expression of his feeling toward the greatest power of the universe. The result must not be too hastily condemned and the discrepancies therein must be treated with compassion.

Considered thus the changing nature of much of theology takes on a new meaning. Changes in theology should not be looked upon as casting doubt upon the actuality of a fundamental truth, nor upon the integrity of the religious emotional background. The religious experience although varying slightly from individual to individual, from time to time, and from religion to religion, actually changes far less and far more slowly than does theology. Especially is this true within the history of any single religion. Changes in the theological expressions mean that the furnishings of man's mind have changed, and that man is seeking to express his religious experience in terms of contemporary modes of thought.

Man's knowledge of the world in which he lives has changed mightily in a few generations. His concepts of space have expanded from miles into light years, and his concepts of time from the generations since Adam into æons and infinity. All this has brought correspond-

ing changes in man's philosophies. These are of the furnishings of man's mind, the material at his disposal for conceptual thinking. Consequently an attempt to work out a satisfactory theology today would be done in minds very differently furnished from those of a thousand or of two thousand years ago. Man's thinking is always limited by what he knows, and must always change with expanding knowledge.

There has been some discussion as to which came first, cult or belief. Did man first develop systems of worshipful practice, which may have grown out of some simple communal practice, and then later develop beliefs which grew out of efforts to explain the cult? Or, did the beliefs develop and in turn give rise to the cult practices? ² For present purposes it makes little difference which interpretation is preferred. A communal practice was not religious until it became related to some sort of god concept even though that concept be merely the vague one of a general supernatural power. Then the practice would be preserved because of its relationship to an experience so personal and so valued as the religious, and it might even undergo much modification in the effort to make it harmonize better with the emotional phases of the religious experience. The belief, or the theology, if it comes after the cult, would then be the development of a system of statements and explanations motivated not only by the religious experience, but also by the cult, because the latter had become associated with the religious experience. If

² For discussions of this problem see King, I., *The Development of Religion*, Chap. 5; Pratt, J. B., *The Religious Consciousness*, Chap. 12; and Ames, E. S., *The Psychology of Religious Experience*, Chaps. 3-10.

eventually it should be proved that theology arose before the cult practice, it would make little difference to the psychology of religion. The cult would then be entirely the expression of the religious experience and of the belief instead of having been in some primitive form adopted by the religious experience.

The Esthetic Expression of Religion.—That there is also an esthetic expression of religious experience is equally well known. Volumes without number have been written upon art expressions in all of their many forms, which have been motivated by religious experience. It is important, however, to emphasize the fundamental fact that all these forms of religious art are expressions of religious feeling. Without the religious experience they would not have been. It must be observed also that this esthetic group of religious expressions includes much that would be rejected by artists and art critics as crude and clumsy. Paintings, statuary, mural decorations, music, architecture, no matter how beautiful and no matter how crude or ugly,—all must be considered in this same esthetic group if they are motivated by religious feeling. And, whatever their artistic value, all religious ceremonials and forms and rituals must likewise be included. Even though the roots of these ceremonies are found by students of the history of religion to reach far back of their religious usage, the interpretation here presented remains unchanged. They were not religious until they were adapted by mankind and made over from the original form and use into expressions of the religious experience achieved. Perhaps a better term than esthetic should be found; but lacking a better, it must serve.

Religious esthetic expressions have been condemned, as well as the intellectual, for their inadequacy. But this inadequacy, or incompleteness, is inherent in the very nature of artistic expression, whatever be the quality of the human experience which motivates it. All developed art, with the possible exception of some few forms of music, seeks to express human feelings through the representation of concepts in some material form. The sculptor stirs in himself the longings and hopes and aspirations, the joys and the sorrows, of the pioneer mother. Then he builds in his constructive imagination, in terms of visual imagery, a conception of a statue which shall express the feelings aroused. Then the statue is produced. Beautiful and satisfying as the product may be it is still very different from the conscious experience of longing, of hope, of aspiration, of joy and of sorrow. The qualitative shadings of the emotional experience cannot be presented in bronze or in stone. Therein lies an unconquerable limitation. The greater the sculptor the less is he hampered of course by the limitations of working through concepts, but even for the greatest something of that limitation still remains. So the expression of religious feeling in statuary form can never be other than partial and incomplete at its best. At its worst it may be but a poor symbol of the qualitative nature of the motivating experience. Painting likewise is achieved through concepts much as is sculpture. And the same is true of architecture. Music is limited by the conventions of form and structure; but, through the possibilities which lie in the progressively changing combinations of sound qualities and the shadings of intensity, a somewhat

closer approximation can often be obtained to the qualitative variations of the emotional experience. Hence the very large place which music has found in religion. Verse, through its use of sound, approximates the possibilities of music; but it in turn is limited by the necessity of working through concepts, of which words are but the symbols.

Ceremonials appeal to some as a peculiarly adequate expression of the religious experience because in them there is a fusion of many different art forms. Music and verse and color and form and movement are all included and the combination results in a high degree of plasticity. The limitations of one art form may not be found in another. But even ceremonial cannot entirely escape the handicap of finite skill and the limitations of conceptual thinking. It can never be a perfect expression of the religious experience, even though it may sometimes be more satisfactory than a creed. But these inadequacies are no just ground for condemnation or rejection. They are abiding expressions of religious feeling and as such they should be evaluated. And it should be emphasized that they are to be evaluated as expressions of religious feeling, when one is thinking in terms of the psychology of religion, and not according to the canons of artistic criticism.

The Conduct Expression of Religion.—Religion, also, and quite as importantly, finds expression in the character of the lives of those who believe and experience the religious emotions. In this group of religious expressions one is thinking not of the lives of the artists nor of the lives of the theologians, except as their lives apart from their art and their theology may be in-

fluenced by religion; but of the lives of the saints, of the Christian fathers, of the missionaries of all times, of the religious geniuses, and especially of the humble for whom life is made endurable and whose lives are made a blessing to all with whom they come in contact because of their religious motivation. A good term for the designation of this group of religious expressions seems not readily available, one at least which is coördinate with esthetic and intellectual, but until a better one can be found it must be referred to as the conduct expression.

This conduct group includes many expressions which are far from permanent, at least in comparison with expressions in art and creedal form. Although the world may be greatly bettered by good deeds and beneficent lives, the world retains no specific record of most of them. But the record need not always be in print in order to endure for a considerable period. Family, local and community tradition often immortalizes religiously motivated conduct which would be otherwise forgotten. Pulpit and platform likewise help to keep alive the unwritten tales of heroic and beneficent conduct. The more conspicuous religious lives of the past, and an ever increasing number in more recent times, find permanent record through the devoted efforts of biographers and historians. In the lives of the saints, of the founders of religious movements, of missionary heroes, of great religiously minded people wherever and however they may have lived, there are to be found records of religious expression quite comparable with all that is recorded in art and in the creeds of the churches.

It should be recalled here that the course of emotional

change in a religious experience was usually from wonder through inferiority and fear to tender emotion. Wonder or curiosity has found its predominant expression in theology. The concluding emotion of the experience, the tender emotion, would leave the individual with the impulse to do the kindly, the generous, act. Supported by certain developments of belief it would result in aiding others to lead happier lives and even to the highest of self-sacrificial conduct. While it is impossible to point to any one factor or phase of the religious experience as the motivation for the esthetic expressions, it is possible to observe that altogether they constitute an experience in life so unique and so highly valued by those who have enjoyed the privilege, as to prompt not only efforts to describe and to explain, but also to express in some permanent artistic form.

Relation to Religious Institutional Differences.—The material is now available for a better understanding of the institutional differences between religious groups. Even a cursory examination of the different religions, and of the different sects within any religion, reveals notable differences in the theologies, in the artistic expressions and in the conduct influences. The stern severities of the New England Calvinistic Christianity contrasts startlingly with the beneficent forgiving sweetness of the founder of Christianity. Where beauty of music and decoration and ceremony are prominent in one sect, ugliness, or at least an indifference to the beautiful, is as conspicuous in another. The source of these differences may be found in the nature of the prevailing religious sentiment, and back of that in the chance of circumstance which has built the sentiment.

Where the pattern of a religious sentiment has been so constructed as to arouse wonder more readily and more intensively than the other emotions involved, the result will be a religious experience highly colored by wonder. This, as has already been pointed out in detail, would lead to emphasis upon the intellectual expression and hence an active development of theology. A religious group in whom such sentiment patterns were the prevalent form would be most likely to produce an elaborate theological development. If the sentiment were such as to arouse wonder and fear prominently, with a strong coloring of inferiority, and very little of the tender emotion factor, the nature of the religious expression motivated would again be largely of the theological nature and with much emphasis upon the greatness and the stern righteousness of the deity. Such was prevalent in the Calvinistic movement. Where the sentiment is such as to arouse fear prominently and the other emotional factors of the experience slightly, then the characteristic expressions are found in prayers and sacrifices, whatever be of a propitiatory nature. Such devotees would believe in their god but with little elaboration of theology, because of the predominant fear of their god and the consequent all-importance of the efforts to achieve the good will of that god. More primitive religions are often of this nature.

Where the characteristic expression of the religious experience is in prayer and contemplation and ascetic practice, there the sentiment producing the religious experience must be such as to make inferiority feelings dominant. Again, if wonder and the inferiority feeling should be most readily and intensively aroused and

their combination dominate without entirely suppressing the touches of fear and tender emotion, the characteristic expression would be the esthetic. Such individuals would be so conscious of the grandeur, the glory, the greatness and the goodness of their god that they would be prompted to make record of it in music and verse and in cathedrals and paintings and in ceremonies for glorification.

If the sentiment be such as to arouse the tender emotion to such an intensity that tenderness is the characteristic quality of the religious experience, then the expressions of those in whom such sentiments reside will be found in good deeds. Such will be constantly prompted to care for the young, the weak, the helpless, the suffering, the downtrodden, the ignorant. The contemporary emphasis upon God as love, upon the loving-kindness, the forgiveness and the long-suffering of God is coincident with an extensive emphasis upon social service, philanthropy, improvement of the conditions of living, brotherhood, and the development of what may be termed the democratic traits of character.

Yet other, many other, forms of the religious sentiment are obviously possible. Where there are four emotional factors to be aroused and each may be aroused in many degrees of intensity (and it is of course possible that there may be religious sentiments which stir touches of yet other emotions), there may be an almost infinite number of kinds of religious sentiments. Only some of the more prominent differences are here mentioned, as an aid to the understanding of the religious differences which appear so prominently in the religious expressions of mankind.

CHAPTER VII

RELIGIOUS APPEALS

It is a curious but valuable observation that an expression of emotion may subsequently be used to arouse emotion. The troubled melancholy which Beethoven expressed in the moonlight sonata is approximated even today in the emotions aroused by a perfect rendering of that composition. Whistler expressed his love for his mother in a painting which has become almost pitifully popular because it stirs similar feelings in all who have known the love of a mother. Where music is the expression of gaiety, it will arouse a similar gaiety wherever it is played. The emotion which motivates the painting or the statue or the cathedral or the poem is aroused anew in whoever beholds the painting or the statue or the cathedral or reads the poem. The engaged youth who is far from his beloved finds in her letters, no matter how old, a stimulus to his love, because they were first the expression of a love. And if her letters be insufficient or not available, then the expressions of love in poetry, although written by people unknown, will serve almost as well because of the skill in expression achieved by the poets. In this fact lies an important cue to the understanding of the religious appeal.

Nature of an Appeal.—In psychology the word appeal is applied to any presentation used in everyday life to arouse feeling or emotion. In the experimental

laboratory the term stimulus is the conventional designation. But the experimental situation is notably different. In the laboratory, stimuli are presented for the purpose of studying the nature of the response aroused. In everyday life, presentations are usually made with an ulterior purpose, a purpose which involves a desire that some particular form of response shall be elicited. Advertising presentations are usually characterized as appeals, because, while strictly speaking they are stimuli to whoever reads them, they are designed with the hope that they will stir certain kinds of emotional reactions. The stories and pictures and speeches and posters of a money raising or of a political campaign are presentations of the appeal variety because they are designed in the hope of producing a certain type of behavior in whoever responds to them. Religious practices may be profitably analyzed in the same manner. When church ceremonies, lights and music and sermons and prayers and recitations, are thought of as appeals for the arousal of religious experience, the first step toward an effective analysis has been taken.

Church Forms and Religious Appeals.—It will soon be discovered that most of the appeals used in current religious practice were first the expression of religious feeling. Such at least are the characteristic appeals, and probably they are the more effective appeals. Religious expressions were found to be of three general forms:—the intellectual, the esthetic, and the conduct. Religious appeals may be likewise grouped. Churches of the day differ notably in the group of appeals most emphasized by each. There are those which always use the latest revised translation of the Bible, where other

pieces of religiously motivated literature are often substituted for the Bible, where the form of the religious meeting is severely simple with every possible suggestion of symbolism and ceremony eliminated, and where the sermon to be considered successful must be a display of erudition, a lecture rather more than a sermon. Again, there are churches in most communities in which the intellectual is minimized, where the service is highly ceremonial, where robes and crosses and music and stained glass abound, where some old version of the Bible is preferred and is read in a monotone, and where the sermon is an expatiation upon the authority, the greatness, the goodness of God. Still again, there are to be found those churches in which neither the intellectual nor the esthetic have any conspicuous place, where the emphasis is upon conduct, upon the repetitious reiteration and idealization of approved incidents in human experience. What this man did and that one felt, what must be done to be saved, how the community can be reformed and the nation regenerated, philanthropy, missions, reform and regeneration are their dominant appeals. These are the churches in which the conduct appeal is prominent.

There has been much loose talk about churches and organizations which are said to stress an "emotional appeal." It must now be evident that such a term is a psychological absurdity. All appeals are emotional appeals. Those organizations which have been said to utilize the "emotional appeal" are, in terms of a more thorough analysis, organizations which stress the conduct appeal strongly, supplemented by a more or less unwitting use of procedures which bring about a high state

of suggestibility and reduced inhibition in order that the religious emotion aroused shall be of a high degree of intensity. The so-called "unemotional churches" are not unemotional if religious experience is aroused. The difference lies in the nature of the appeals used, and in the continued maintenance of critical self control which prevents the emotions aroused ever rising to a high degree of intensity.

Such observations prompt one to attempt a classification of churches in terms of the appeals which they use. But such an attempt soon fails and the discovery is made that rarely does any church or religious institution use one appeal group to the exclusion of the others. From time to time any selected church may utilize all three groups of appeals. The classificatory scheme is of value chiefly as an aid in the interpretation of the problems of some given church at some particular time. Churches or sects or movements as national or international institutions cannot be successfully distributed within the subheads of such a scheme of classification.

Incidentally, it is well to observe that individual churches with changes in the character of their people and their leadership may manifest notable changes in the emphasis placed upon one or another of these different kinds of religious appeals. A church which at one time leaned heavily upon the intellectual appeal may a generation later be found stressing the esthetic appeal. In another church the course of the change may be quite different.

Dissatisfaction in churches may not infrequently be traced to such shifts of emphasis. One pastor may, because of the nature of the religious sentiment de-

veloped in him, prefer a certain group or pattern of appeals. That is what is most effective in producing the religious experience in himself. And because it is effective with himself he may mistakenly assume that his people will likewise respond most readily to that form of appeal. The dissatisfied in any given church may be dissatisfied because the appeal, or pattern of appeals, there in use is one to which they do not so readily respond.

Sentiments and Religious Appeals.—It has been already pointed out that people differ in the composition of their religious sentiments, and in the consequent shadings of the qualitative sequence in their religious experience. Those whose sentiments are such as to arouse a religious experience with wonder as the dominant quality have, it may be safely assumed, had their religious sentiment developed under circumstances of predominant emphasis upon theology and philosophy, upon thoughts of God and man and of his place in the universe. Sentiments it will be recalled are acquired through frequent repetition of experience with an object either actually present to the senses or vividly imagined. If the experiences which have developed the sentiment have been largely conceptual, thoughts about God and the relation of man to God and the like, then that sentiment will always be most easily aroused by presentations in which intellectual appeals are prominent. Other forms of the religious sentiment will be such as respond most readily to the esthetic appeals; while yet others, especially those which prominently activate the tenderness factor, will be most quickly responsive to the conduct appeals. And each of these

may respond but poorly to other appeal groups. If then a given church emphasizes a single appeal group to the exclusion of the others, it is likely to be effective with only a limited range of people; and, being in ignorance of these psychological differences, they are likely to misunderstand and even to condemn as irreligious those who do not respond to the same appeals as they themselves. To the psychologist, much of the religious strife and misunderstanding over religious matters is due to a failure to recognize these differences from person to person in the make-up of the religious sentiment.

Young people growing up in a given church may, for causes too subtle for easy discovery, develop a form of religious sentiment which fails to respond readily to the appeals habitually used in the church of their parents. They may thus become dissatisfied, and remain so, until they find some church or religious organization which does utilize appeals which are effective in their lives. This is much more likely to occur where the religious training of childhood is less thorough. Children who have been well drilled from infancy in the practices of a particular church, in whom the religious sentiment has been established by studied repetition, may become, at times and in later years, temporarily indifferent, but they rarely become so changed that the old sentiment cannot be re-aroused especially in times of distress. One form of religious conversion rests upon this fact.¹ When parents are lax in the religious training of their children, many factors may influence the

¹ See Chapter VIII of this book and also De Sanctis, S., *Religious Conversion* (Harcourt), Chap. IV.

formation of the children's religious sentiments which are different from those in the experience of the parent. The result may be a very loosely developed sentiment, or it may be one which is best aroused by appeals quite different from those to which the parents are responsive.

Non-religious People.—It is equally possible for individuals to grow up without ever having a religious sentiment established in their nervous organization. Such people may occasionally experience awe in the presence of religious appeals and possibly even the full course of the religious experience, when circumstances chance to be most favorable; but such people are far less easily stirred to a religious experience because of the absence of the religious sentiment. They may be called non-religious, and perhaps the term is as well applied to them as to anyone, although a more completely non-religious person would be one who not only lacked the religious sentiment but who also had no concept of a god that was ever accompanied by a belief attitude. A person of the latter description would be extremely difficult to find.

Professor Ames² has proposed that non-religious people are those who do not enter whole-heartedly into the activities and feelings of the social order. This is in harmony with his conception of religion as an appreciation and expression of social ideals and values, to be sure, but in the light of other conceptions, especially the one here presented, a man could not be considered religious merely because he entered vitally into the affairs of the social order. To be religious there must

² Ames, E. S., *The Psychology of Religious Experience* (Houghton), Chap. 19.

be in the individual experience a believed-in concept of a god which functions as an aid in adjustment to the individual's world, a part of which is his social order. Without such a concept and the accompanying belief neither the religious experience nor the religious sentiment are possible.

Appeal as a New Basis for Evaluation.—Recognition of the fact that expressions of religious experience are in turn utilized for their appeal value in arousing religious experience introduces a new and significant criterion for the evaluation of religious institutions and customs. Hitherto it has been customary to estimate creeds in terms of logical consistency and in terms of such logical developments as theology and philosophy. Religious music and verse and paintings and statuary and architecture and ceremonial have been evaluated in terms of the canons of artistic criticism. Incidents of human conduct have been judged by the standards of some system of ethics. But now, from the viewpoint of the psychology of religion, the theologies and the art and the conduct incidents of religion must be estimated also in terms of a psychological criterion, their effectiveness when used as appeals in the arousal of the religious experience.

The casual and logically minded church attendant will not infrequently find himself asked to participate in the singing of a hymn or in the responsive reading of some passage which is very old. Examination of the concepts expressed in the hymn or the passage reveals thoughts which are repugnant. They seem to be in such startling contrast to the present beliefs of his friends in the church that he wonders how they can

endure the singing and reading of such material. From the point of view of the visitor's logic, doubtless, such hymns and such responsive readings should be rejected; but the explanation for their continued use lies in their psychological values. The fact seems to be clear that the regular worshipers who profit by the singing and the reading of such concepts rarely give any thought to the logical significances of what they sing and read. The material of the hymn and the scriptural passage originated as the expression of religious experience. Since then they have been used to arouse religious experience. For long they were effective merely because they were originally the expression of religious experience. With the passage of time and the gradual change of human thought, the concepts used became obsolete. But with that passage of time other processes were also functioning. Children were growing up in whom religious sentiments were being established. And these old hymns and scripture passages were a part of that total situation which entered into the formation of their religious sentiments. Hence the retention of those hymns and passages because of their continued effectiveness. The worshiper today may say that he loves the old hymns and scripture passages, without ever having thought of their logical implications. What he means is that they serve to arouse in him the religious experience. They do so now not because they were ever the expression of his religious experience, but because they were an important part of the situations which formed his own religious sentiment. Their value now lies in the strength of their religious appeal. While from the point of view of pure logic or ethics they

might have to be rejected, from the point of view of psychology they may long be retained for their effectiveness.

The same criterion applies equally well to the recitation of creeds and other reiterations of theological doctrine. It applies also to ceremonials and the other artistic appeals. Creeds, nor single items in them, cannot wisely be discarded from religious practice merely because they seem unable to endure the cold light of human reason. They may still be effective in stimulating the religious sentiment of the worshiper even when the knowledge of man has expanded far beyond their concepts.

The use of elaborate religious ceremonials is far too often condemned in haste, especially by those whose religious sentiments are patterned to respond to other forms of appeal. The ceremonial items may be ancient and antiquated. The rapid reading of scripture passages in a tone of voice such that few can follow the meaning, the hurried repetition of prayers, the wearing of robes, the genuflections, the candles, the ugly stained glass representations of scenes from religious history, the wealth of symbolism, and all may appear to be but so much archaic trumpery to the religious critical mind. But the fact remains that all this has been for many generations effective in arousing religious experience in countless individuals and that for many it is still effective. It was originally effective because it was the expression of the religious experience. It continues to be effective today in part for that same reason but also because it has functioned so largely in the formation of the religious sentiments established in the worshipers of today.

Duration of Appeals.—Enduring as is the value of religious appeals, it must also be recognized that changes take place. Esthetic and ethical and logical judgments accumulating through the years will eventually negate the effectiveness of certain once useful appeals. One has but to turn to the history of religious customs to discover this slow change of evaluation. Dancing, once an important factor in religious ceremonial, has in the history of the Christian church undergone a decline of appeal value to a point where it has been almost universally abandoned. The use of incense seems likewise to be in the process of becoming obsolete.

New appeals constantly arise. Religious literature is produced from time to time, items from which soon find their place among the effective religious appeals. Within recent times a conspicuous example of this is the production of Mrs. Eddy's *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, which has become so effective a religious appeal for many. Any mature person who has lived in contact with religious customs can recall many instances of the appearance of new hymns, words and music both, which have been quickly adopted and remain today effective for their continued appeal value. New expressions of religion in the lives of individuals are constantly appearing. New biographies of religiously motivated lives and new incidents of religiously motivated heroism appear and are immediately utilized. Some of these become permanently established as religious classics. So, by the slow elimination of appeals that lose their value and the steady production of new appeals, change in the material used for the arousal of religious experience takes place.

The Redintegrative Process.—Before turning to a consideration of those religious appeals which are not first the expression of religious feeling, it is necessary to recall that psychological phenomenon known as redintegration. This term is now used to designate that process by which the whole of a former experience is aroused by only a part of the original stimulating situation.³ The ordinary experience of perception is an excellent example of redintegration. From the sound and the sight and the touch and the weight of a watch we develop some sort of an organized pattern of response. After this is established the sound of the tick of the watch alone is sufficient to activate the whole pattern and give us the perception of a watch. Sentiments when well established manifest the same redintegrative form of behavior. The boy in love has his emotions stirred by the perception of a glove which has been in the possession of his beloved, or by the perception of her handkerchief, or a lock of her hair, by anything in fact which is perceived as having been associated with her, the object of his love sentiment. And it is also important to observe that the stimulus to the redintegrative process need not necessarily be a perception with its objective stimulation. The same redintegration may be aroused by a memory image provided it is the image of something which was a part of the original situation or pattern of stimuli.

Primitive Religious Appeals.—So many people claim to have experiences of a religious nature stimu-

³ For a detailed presentation of this see Hollingworth, H. L., *Psychology: Its Facts and Principles*. (New York, Appleton, 1928.) Chaps. 1 and 4.

lated by the beauty of the sunset, the grandeur of the mountains, the glory of the starlight, or when amid "the tall cathedral pines" that it would be foolish to deny their assertions. But their acceptance raises at once a new problem. The sunset, the mountains, the stars and the pines are not first the expression of religious feeling as have been the other appeals so far considered. Hence it is apparently necessary to add a group of what may for convenience be termed the primitive religious appeals. One need not enter the debatable ground of theory concerning the origin of religion to observe that man was early much moved by the natural phenomena about him. The worships of the sun, the moon, the heavens, trees, fire and the like are evidence sufficient that man was much impressed by nature. And most of these still retain their power to stir his feelings. Religious institutions not infrequently make use of these primitive appeals. Prayer meetings are held on hillsides at sunset, sometimes even at sunrise, camp meetings are held in groves of tall trees, and religious talks are not infrequently made by the dying embers of some camp fire.

While there may be occasional individuals who react to the presentations of nature in primitive uninhibited fashion they are certainly so exceptional as to constitute a special problem for interpretation. The vast majority of human beings have what of the primitive there is in them so overlaid by a vast accumulation of acquired modes of behavior, habit patterns, that they rarely if ever react in the purely primitive manner. This must be fully recognized in explaining the modern religious responses to the order of nature.

It is quite probable that very much of what is called a religious response to the grandeurs and beauties of nature is not religious at all. Experiences of admiration, awe and of reverence even may be so aroused and, by those who do not distinguish carefully, be easily mistaken for religious experiences. The relatively unreligious person may out of curiosity enter a great cathedral and experience the somber hushed feeling of awe. Later he may have the same emotional experience while watching a sunset over the Grand Canyon, and, recalling that he once had a similar experience in a cathedral, assert that both were religious. Such confusions are without doubt of very frequent occurrence.

If, however, the response to the natural setting be a little more complex it may be genuinely religious. If the presence of natural magnificence stirs not only awe but also thoughts of a deity, of personal worthlessness or insignificance, and all the feelings which attend such thoughts, then there may be a religious experience with the characteristic re-orientation as a consequence. To be thoroughly Christian, such an experience would have to conclude with the tender emotion and the impulse to kindly conduct. If, again, one assumes that the individual who reports a religious experience in response to some setting of nature has in himself a well established religious sentiment, then his testimony of a religious experience may be readily accepted. By the process of reintegration, just described, the religious experience may be easily aroused. The grandeur of the sunset may stir the awe response and that may in turn set up the reintegrative process for the religious experience. Or the sunset may stir thoughts of God which

is one of the features of the pattern ordinarily arousing the religious sentiment, and so by redintegration it may be as actively aroused as when at worship in his accustomed church. Where the religious meeting is taken out onto the hillside, or into the woods, or by the camp fire, there is an obvious combination of the cognitive or the esthetic or the conduct appeals with the primitive group of appeals. Each is used to reinforce the other.

It is further possible that the effects of mere knowledge, of great discoveries in science, of great conceptions, may be such as to justify the inclusion of knowledge in the list of primitive appeals. Here there must be a careful distinction between knowledge and the development of thinking about God motivated by the religious experience. The reaction of primitive man to those who had or claimed to have power over the forces of nature (magic) seems to have been religious. If the magician himself believed in the efficacy of the charms which he used, then he may also have had a religious experience aroused by thoughts of them. But, whatever may have been the reactions of primitive man, we find today many people who claim that mathematics, scientific deductions from observed phenomena, and great philosophic conceptions and modes of reasoning stir in them religious experience. Of course, these reactions may be but experiences of awe or admiration hastily or ignorantly misnamed religious. It is also possible that great ideas may, as has already been pointed out in the reactions to the beauties of nature, stir thoughts of God and of man's relation to God and thus the religious course of feeling be genuinely experienced.

If such knowledge is to be accepted as one of the religious appeals, it must obviously fall in the primitive group because it is not first the expression of religious experience.

When Religious Appeals are Most Effective.—The effectiveness of any religious appeal may be much increased by attention to the circumstances under which it is used. There are conditions which militate against the effectiveness of any appeal. Some of these are beyond the possibility of external control. Still it is possible, by taking proper thought, to increase the power of any religious appeal, at least to eliminate obstacles to its stimulating effect. The combination of a critical attitude with an alert, active state of mind presents a condition least likely to be responsive to religious appeals. Such a combination makes the person quickly and attentively responsive to imperfections in the music, to crudities in the decorations, to defects in the architecture of the building, or to flaws in the logic of the sermon. Any circumstance, objective or subjective, which aids in the elimination of the critical attitude will aid enormously in bringing about the desired responsiveness. Whatever establishes an attitude of expectancy, or hope of achieving a religious experience, contributes far more in the same direction. The attitude of expectancy is desirable not only because it aids through its lack of all negativism, but also because it permits a fixation of attention upon the significant features of the religious appeals. The consequence of this is a retraction of the field of consciousness which makes distraction by intruding critical thoughts, or any other kind of distraction, far less likely. Thus the

despairing, conscience stricken, grief laden mind is peculiarly responsive to religious appeals because of the seeking, groping, longing attitude engendered by the depression.

While the expectant and the uncritically desiring mind is the responsive mind, this should not be hastily interpreted as an argument in support of church advertising. Such advertising is far more likely to bring attendants who are expecting to be entertained than it is to bring attendants seeking the inspiration of religious experience. Doubtless many so advertise and many respond to such advertising who are unable to distinguish between the two kinds of experience. And it may be that some religious organizations in their blind struggle for attendance provide only entertainment. Others possibly provide the entertainment as an attractive feature and then seek after the audience has arrived to change their attitude and to produce in its place one of religious expectancy. While such a transformation is not at all impossible, its achievement requires the hand of a master and much study of procedure.

Although it is none too well understood, there is a generally recognized function or condition within the nervous system which is called facilitation. This seems to be some sort of preparatory activation of a nerve pattern so that it responds more readily to stimulation. In the study of attention it is found that anticipation or expectancy functions in the manner of facilitation, with the effect of aiding the speed or intensity of the response to the expected stimulus. As the religious sentiment is assumed to be some sort of pattern, not

unlike a habit pattern, in the central nervous system, it is legitimate to assume that expectancy may operate to facilitate its functioning. There is also the fairly wide acceptance of a process in the nervous system known as drainage. According to this principle the activated nerve pattern draws other excitations into itself. If this is a fact, then the activation of one nerve pattern would make it, at least temporarily, less easy to arouse near-by or closely allied patterns. If expectancy acts as a preparatory activation of one pattern, this should, by the principle of drainage, make other patterns less easily aroused.

The application of these two principles of facilitation and drainage to the functioning of the religious sentiment in everyday life results in observations of no little importance. Individuals who expect when they attend a religious service that there will be an emphasis upon the cognitive appeal will thus be in a condition to respond most readily to that appeal, and less than usually responsive to any other form of appeal. Should such persons by chance be appealed to by that which is predominantly esthetic or of the conduct variety, they might fail to respond with the religious experience and be irritated into leaving in disgust. The general condemnation which they would be likely to utter for all such kinds of religious activity would be colored by their irritation and should not be interpreted as of other significance than their failure to find what they anticipated.

It should also be observed that the expectancy for a scientific lecture is quite different from that for a religious experience. A different pattern or sentiment is

activated. One goes to a lecture open-minded, critically minded, expecting perhaps to find instruction, but also to be on guard against any possible fallacy of reasoning. This is far from the expectancy proper to make one most responsive to a religious appeal. If the preliminaries of a church order of worship or, especially, if the preliminary portions of a sermon are such as to stir the lecture attitude, the lecture response instead of the religious is about all that can be looked for.

There is also the expectancy which prepares for the conduct appeals, and the expectancy which prepares for the esthetic appeals, and there is the expectancy which prepares for a religious adjustment without a special preparation for any one form of religious appeal. The last is of course the most easily satisfied. If a variety of appeals is habitually used by any church or religious service, the effect will be the establishment of this latter variety of general expectancy.

Fatigue, despair, grief and the consciousness of wrongdoing produce alike a vague groping for relief. They all prevent the cold critical analytical consciousness. Fatigue is well known to reduce both the quality and the quantity of mental work, to minimize its effectiveness. Depressing emotions, of which despair, grief and the consciousness of wrongdoing are but three forms, are well known to be profoundly disturbing to the strength or tenacity of mental organization. In such states people do not think as clearly, nor as calmly, neither in terms of their highest knowledge nor of their better selves. And there is an unsatisfied longing for that which will aid in bringing the peace of mind, the renewed orientation in life which will make it endurable

if not enjoyable once more. The consequence is a heightened responsiveness to all forms of religious appeal. To such, religion has all through the ages been a comfort and a source of strength, and they are more or less aware of that fact. So they turn to religious institutions for relief. No better condition for the effectiveness of religious appeals can be conceived.

The success of many evangelistic campaigns is without doubt attributable to the means by which these disturbed states of mind are produced. By preaching and by advertising, through the distribution of tracts, by testimonies and by songs an intense depression is aroused over actual or imaginary sinfulness, grief over past acts, despair over what is termed a lost condition. However justifiable such procedures may be they are effective because they produce that groping, seeking, distracted, condition of mind comparable to that of those who are distressed by the actual cares and sorrows of life. By such means there is a preparation made for the use of any or all of the kinds of religious appeals, a preparation which almost certainly insures their effectiveness.

CHAPTER VIII

NATURE OF CONVERSION

When the modern scientific psychology first turned attention to religious behavior one of the most conspicuous features was the evangelical revivalistic conversion. At that time the conversion experience was far more generally insisted upon as a prerequisite to Protestant church membership than it is today. The intensities and often the extravagances of this conversion experience quite naturally made it an attractive subject for investigation. The result was a considerable literature on the subject and a tendency, occasionally evident, to identify the psychology of religion with the psychology of conversion.

Definitions of Conversion.—The term conversion, as it is used in the study of religion, may be intended to convey any one of four different meanings. It may designate (1) a change in beliefs, attitudes, habits and ideals attended by an overwhelming sequence of emotional accompaniment, all of which is conceived as attributable to the miraculous effect of a divine intervention in the life of the converted individual. This is frequently spoken of as a “work of grace.” When the term conversion is used with this meaning, that of divine intervention, it is obviously used to convey a meaning which is beyond the field of psychological work and thought. The psychological definition must of necessity be more limited. Conversion is (2) also

used to designate those changes of belief and conduct attendant upon a change from devotion to one religion to the acceptance of another as the consequence of due consideration and conviction. It may also be used to designate the giving up of the special beliefs of one sect for the adoption of the special beliefs of another sect. A change from Mohammedanism to Christianity would be called a conversion, even though there were no implication of divine intervention. The same would be true of a change from some Protestant sect to the faith of the Roman Catholic. Again the term conversion is used (3), especially by Roman Catholic authors, to designate a return to the sacraments and the habits of the practical Catholic after a period of neglect or indifference. Finally (4) conversion may designate a change from a self-centered irreligious and a-social if not anti-social life to an altruistic religious socially acceptable mode of living.

The last three uses designate forms of behavior which are well within the possibilities of psychological study and analysis. They may differ in emphasis and in duration, and they may differ greatly in the amount of emotional excitation involved, but they all represent profound changes in the behavior of human beings and all involve religious beliefs and practices. They may thus be properly termed conversion phenomena and be profitably subjected to psychological examination.

Descriptions of the conversion experience have, with a few rare exceptions ¹ been written by people untrained

¹ Excellent examples are to be found in Lutoslawski, W., "The Conversion of a Psychologist," *Hibbert Journal*, 1922-3, 21, 697-710, and in De Sanctis, S., *Religious Conversion* (Harcourt, 1927).

in psychological introspection and in the use of psychological terms. The difficulty of understanding them is further increased by the free use of traditional religious language, the meanings of which are not often very exact even for the religiously trained, by people who are yet but novices in religious life and thought. Furthermore, converted people are often so impressed by the moments of exaltation which they have experienced that they devote their descriptions largely to those moments, with neglect or underevaluation of the other stages or phases of the conversion experience. Nevertheless it is instructive to read these descriptions.²

Stages in Conversion.—While many variations of form are evident it will be found possible to distinguish a preliminary or preparatory period, a crucial moment of change or acceptance of the new, and an after period. In the preliminary or preparatory period there is a more or less gradual establishment of the belief that the accustomed habits of life and of the interpretation of life are wrong or at least inadequate. New ideals are developing, or the possibility of their adoption is recognized, and these are in sharp contrast with the life of the individual as it is. This contrast between what the individual is, of what he thinks himself to be, and the consciousness of what he should be stirs depressing emotional reactions.³ In the conventional language of religion this is "conviction of sin."

² For originals see—Pratt, J. B., *The Religious Consciousness*, Chap. 7; De Sanctis, S., *Religious Conversion*, Chaps. 3 and 8; James, W., *Varieties of Religious Experience*, Chaps. 9 and 10; Begbie, Harold, *Twice Born Men*; Burr, A. R., *Confessions and Confessants*, Chaps. 5, 6, 7.

³ A. R. Burr found in her study of biographies that many conversions were associated with periods of sickness. See her *Religious Confessions*

Sometimes these depressing emotions are of serious intensity. The individual is in despair. There is a clinging to the old ways of living and thinking, a disinclination to give up, perhaps for fear of the disapproval of associates, and the consciousness of an approaching conviction that such a change is inevitable if peace of mind is to be achieved. Eventually the conviction becomes dominant. There is a definite acceptance of the new ideals and interpretations. The conflict, of a near-Freudian nature, which had prevailed between the desires to retain the old and to accept the new is by the acceptance of the new resolved.

Decisions in life, after disturbing periods of uncertainty, are usually accompanied by relief and often by a touch of exaltation, especially if there is the slightest consciousness of having "done the right thing." In the conversion experience, especially if intensified by the methods of the revival campaign, the conflict and the depression is severe. Consequently, the pleasurable experience of relief and the consciousness of having at last accepted the right are by so much intensified. The language of those who have experienced it is often extravagant, and to the psychologist this can but indicate that the experience is not only one of exaltation but is unique in the life of the individual and is highly pleasurable.

The after or concluding period of the conversion process is characterized by some lingering mood-like

and Confessants, p. 210. These would obviously give opportunity for meditation and the physical weakness would aid in producing the inferiority feeling.

effect from the crisis which gives to this period a joyous character, although far from the intensity of the crisis. It is described as a time of peculiar peace, happiness, relief and calm. There is also a new attitude toward others which must be observed by the psychologist with care. It is described as a new and strong desire to be helpful to others, a new love for others. And there are statements about a new feeling of close relationship to nature and to God which indicate the completeness of the new adjustment.⁴

Types of Conversion.—The many individual differences in the course of the conversion experience and the fact that many people seek the experience but fail to achieve it have led to efforts at classification or to distinguish different kinds of conversion. It has been pointed out, especially by Starbuck and Coe and James,⁵ that there are many people who develop through childhood and adolescence into the same altruistic socialized life with the same sort of religious belief, but without ever having passed through a period which can be recalled as one of conversion. In later work Coe⁶ has emphasized this as the ideal mode of religious development, the one which will prevail when religious and moral education approximates perfection. But in the earlier book he suggested that the differences between those who easily achieved the conversion experience and those who did not were due to a dif-

⁴ Here the serious student of religion should not fail to read Chaps. 4-10 of E. D. Starbuck's *Psychology of Religion*.

⁵ Starbuck, E. D., *Psychology of Religion*, Chap. 24; Coe, G. A., *The Spiritual Life*, Chap. 3; James, Wm., *Varieties of Religious Experience*, Lectures 4 and 5.

⁶ Coe, G. A., *Education in Religion and Morals*.

ference in temperament. Knowledge of temperament types was even more limited then than it is today and the number of cases Coe used was so small as to be inconclusive, still it did seem to indicate that what we should call today the more inhibited personality, or perhaps the more introverted, was less likely to experience religious conversion. Recently De Sanctis⁷ has presented the same distinction, between the "fulminating or lighting" type and the "progressive" type, with the contention that they are merely differences of duration of the process, that the fundamental psychological changes are the same in each.⁸

Age of Conversion.—There have been many efforts to determine the age at which conversion is most likely to occur. These have been prompted quite as much by the effort to explain as by the desire to determine the most frequent location of an experience so important to students of religious education. Many of the early studies were based upon far too small numbers of cases. Several of these were brought together by Hall⁹ resulting in a significantly large number and a very regular distribution. More recently a coöperative church survey directed by W. S. Athearn¹⁰ collected a mass of data from Indiana Sunday School teachers and from five Protestant denominations throughout the United States. These studies made nearly twenty years apart present an informing comparison.

⁷ De Sanctis, S., *Religious Conversion*, Chap. 3.

⁸ A very recent investigation of 2174 cases revealed but 6.7% experiencing the crisis type of conversion. See E. T. Clark's *Psychology of Religious Awakening* (Macmillan, 1929), p. 47.

⁹ Hall, G. S., *Adolescence*, p. 290 of Vol. 2.

¹⁰ *Indiana Survey of Religious Education*, Vol. 1, pp. 371-378.

The following table presents the comparison:—

	No.	AGE POINTS		
		1st Q	Median	3rd Q.
Hall summary	4054	14 yrs., 2 mos.	16 yrs., 7 mos.	19 yrs., 1 mo.
Indiana S. S. teachers.	1693	12 yrs., 7 mos.	14 yrs., 11 mos.	17 yrs., 7 mos.
Indiana survey supp., 43 states	6194	11 yrs., 11 mos.	14 yrs., 7 mos.	21 yrs., 5 mos.

This means that in the Hall summary one quarter of the conversions reported occurred before the age of fourteen years and two months, that one half occurred before the age of sixteen years and seven months, and that three quarters occurred before the age of nineteen years and one month. Examination of the Indiana study indicates that there has been a notable shift down the age scale with the exception of the third quartile point. The Indiana curve reveals a very large number of adults joining the church, strung out through the years into old age. There are so many of these as to make the curve decidedly skewed with an average (19.09 yrs.) far above the median.

Explanation of these differences between the two age studies is to be found, in all probability, in a change of emphasis which has taken place in the intervening twenty years. Where the older studies sought the age of conversion and the data were gathered by a sort of questionnaire method, the Indiana study is a compilation of the ages at which the individuals involved actually joined a church. And these ages were checked

by reference to the church records. With the decline in emphasis upon the experience of conversion and an increasing emphasis upon "decision days," increasing numbers have been taken into church membership at earlier ages. In a new investigation of 2174 responses from many parts of the country, E. T. Clark ¹¹ has thoughtfully separated those who experienced a definite crisis from those who came into religious living gradually. He finds that the average age has not changed for those experiencing a definite crisis, but is much lower for the others (about the age of 12 years).

Interpretations.—A psychological interpretation of the conversion phenomenon will be conditioned inevitably by whatever stand the interpreter takes on the debated subject of the relative influence of the inherent or intrinsic versus the environmental or extrinsic influences in individual development. The earlier students of conversion were working in a period when genetic psychology was largely influenced by the assumption of many instincts and the notion that individual development was first of all an efflorescent or blossoming process. In Starbuck's study there are frequent references to instincts as motivating factors, and Coe had much to say about "awakenings." Hall in treating the subject wrote of the birth of a larger self. Today the tendency in genetic psychology is to think of individual development as a progressive differentiation due to the interaction between a growing living organism and its environment, a progress not normally characterized by periodic outbursts of growth.

¹¹ Clark, E. T., *The Psychology of Religious Awakening*. New York, Macmillan, 1929. Pp. 170.

Nevertheless, there is still a difference of opinion and so the efflorescence doctrine should be included in any list of explanations of a developmental phenomenon. As it is the first historically it may well be summarized first.

1. *The Efflorescence or Blossoming Doctrine.*—According to this doctrine the characteristics of individual development are determined in large part by some obscure but innate factors. For the explanation of conversion this means that these innate factors predispose the individual at a certain age of development to be peculiarly responsive to the appeal of religion. The age of most frequent conversion would then indicate that age at which the child is in the nascent period of religious growth.¹² This would be the time of religious awakening or the birth of the larger self. Those who held this point of view found support for their theory in the discovery that most peoples have in some fashion recognized the change taking place in the growing person at or soon after the advent of puberty.¹³ That even primitive peoples had ceremonies at about the same age as Christian conversion and confirmation was somehow supposed to lend support to the notion that there was an intrinsic determining factor. The heavy emphasis placed upon the recapitulation theory¹⁴ at that time may have made the genetic

¹² Coe on the basis of a small number of cases found a trimodal curve and reasoned that there must be three such periods. See his *Spiritual Life*, Chap. 1.

¹³ Hall, G. S., *Adolescence*, Chaps. 13 and 14; Daniels, A. H., "The New Life: A Study in Regeneration," *American Journal of Psychology*, 1893-5, 6, 61-103.

¹⁴ That the changes or stages through which the individual passes in both prenatal and postnatal development rehearse the stages of the

psychologists more kindly disposed toward all that was racial.

Perhaps the strongest argument for intrinsic factors determining the appearance of conversion in early or mid-adolescence was found in its close relationship to the development of the sex function. Hall made much of this. And it will be recalled by most readers that Hall was one of those who believed that all forms of love were derived from the sex instinct. Religion and love were examined and both were found to manifest striking similarities in their behavior. Hall listed ¹⁵ a large number of these similarities. A few of them follow:

- a. Both make the individual peculiarly responsive to nature.
- b. Both easily develop fanaticisms.
- c. Both tend to self-abasement and to self-exaltation.
- d. Both stimulate to the building of houses for the beloved.
- e. Both tend to the development of rituals.

As sexual maturation is so obviously a functional development of intrinsic determination, and, as religious development comes at about the same time and is in its behavior so similar, it was argued that religious behavior must also be in large part a development from within.

The most serious defect of this theory lies, as all modern students of psychology know and as has been evolution of the race, because of some intrinsic determination. The best critical consideration of this theory will be found in P. E. Davidson's *The Recapitulation Theory and Human Infancy* (Teachers College, 1914).

¹⁵ Hall, G. S., *Adolescence*, Vol. 2, p. 295-301.

pointed out in earlier chapters, in the very great uncertainty of the assumption of a religious instinct. That there is a progressive differentiation resulting in some very marked changes in the life and thought and feeling of the individual can be granted, and that is all that is necessary for the conversion phenomenon. The physical development of the sex function may be intrinsically determined, but that does not mean that love is. To prove that love in all its forms is derived from the sex instinct is exceedingly difficult if not impossible. It is better to think of love as a sentiment. And just because religious conversion occurs at or near the time of puberty is far from sufficient reason for concluding that conversion is therefore a phase of sex development. The relationship may be merely a coincidence. At about the time of puberty the range of experience and the capacity to understand have reached such a degree of development as to make the individual responsive to a religious appeal. During the dawn of adolescence youth is unstable and emotional, and this instability may be aggravated or brought about in part by the changes of pubescence. It may be that this instability makes the emotional disturbances of the intense revival form of conversion more easily aroused. If religious experience cannot be derived from the sex instinct, then this is about all the relationship between sex development and the appearance of conversion phenomena which can be accepted.

2. *Socialization Theory*.—It has long been recognized that, in the course of development from childhood to maturity, every individual experiences a change which is often described, more dramatically than accurately,

as a "change in the center" of life's activities. Hall described it as a change from the autocentric life to the heterocentric. The development of infancy and childhood is, as a rule, a most individualistic and self centered progress. The life of the home centers about the child. His achievements are lauded and rewarded, his future is dwelt upon, and his wants are satisfied. Whatever may be the intrinsic tendencies the environment forces a self-centered development. Little by little the responsibilities and duties of life press more and more heavily for recognition and adjustment. Responsibilities appear which must be shouldered and which conflict with the established individualistic ambitions. Now one and now another cherished dream is relinquished because its realization might bring sorrow or distress to some loved one. These are not always given up freely, but often reluctantly and with regret. The prospects of marriage and domestic responsibility necessitate yet more sacrifice and more living with the welfare of others in mind. There is thus in normal development an inevitable process of socialization.

The emotional aspects of this socialization process, sometimes miscalled a conversion, are not without their importance. The giving up of cherished personal hopes and ambitions is usually attended by much disturbing emotion. The youth hesitates, debates, fusses over it; and then as a rule comes through brilliantly. Such experiences come not once but many times in the struggle up to full maturity. Each past experience pales into insignificance before the intensities of the present. The emotional accompaniment is not always regret

and disappointment. Often the new responsibility looms large in the mind of the youth and his own capacity and achievement seems so small that he is genuinely depressed, if not fearful. Then with the passage of time and the successful discharge of the new responsibility there comes the elation of success, the joy of achievement.

There is to be sure a striking and important similarity between the items mentioned in this socialization process and those listed in the stages of conversion. There is the dissatisfaction with the old way of doing and thinking in the light of the new possibility; there is the disinclination for a time to give up the old; there is the depression and feeling of incapacity or unworthiness; there is eventually the decision, the turning in the new direction, the establishment of new habits or new ways of living; and there is the peace and joy and happiness accompanying the acceptance of the new and its prosecution. From the point of view of habit and emotion the course of the change is so much like the conversion process, that some have thought them identical. Hall made much of this, thinking that in this normal change from the autocentric to the heterocentric there was to be found the genetic base of the religious conversion. But similarity must not be mistaken for identity. There is after all an important difference between the socialization process and true conversion.

The socialization process is a purely secular and ethical matter. It may take place, and doubtless often does, without the involvement of religious ideas. Herein lies the difference between mere socialization and conversion. The one is an ethical, the other a religious experience.

It will be recalled that one of the motivations presented for the development of religion was the effort of man to adjust himself to his world, to achieve habits not only of action but also of thought and belief which would serve to make him feel at home, at ease, and at peace in the world as he knew it. Thus considered socialization is but a partial adjustment.

The social situation which every youth confronts, that situation which engenders the consciousness of responsibility, is but a part of the world which he faces as an individual human being. Adjustment to the social situation is but a part of the problem, although that part of the problem often looms so large in the mind of the youth as to make him less immediately sensitive to its larger and more difficult implications. The more brilliant and meditative minds are the more likely to see the larger significances by their unaided ability and it is they who are most likely to struggle with religious problems along with their progress in socialization. They are the ones most likely to experience the "storm and stress" period of the earlier genetic psychologists. Others may have the religious problems forced home to them by associates, through literature or by preaching. Often, however, the stresses of life fall so heavily upon a youth that the only hope of an adjustment to them is to be found through religion. Then the change becomes truly a conversion.

3. *The Substitution or Unconscious Doctrine.*—One of the most distinctive volumes ever published on the analysis of religious behavior was James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*. While writing that volume James was very much influenced by a new contemporary em-

phasis upon the significance of the subconscious. In explaining conversion he assumed the accumulation and even organization of material in the subconscious, and that the conversion experience was the substitution of this material coming from the subconscious for the habits and interpretations which had been dominating the conscious. More recently under the influence of the psychoanalytic movement De Sanctis has elaborated the same theory.¹⁶

The possibilities in the utilization of psychoanalytic psychology for the interpretation of conversion have been pretty well canvassed by De Sanctis. And they are many. Students of psychoanalysis will recall that obsessions and phobias and such hysterical seizures as manifest the temporary domination by memories which are at other times beyond the possibility of voluntary recall are interpreted as being intrusions of dream-like material into the waking consciousness.¹⁷ The theory asserts that certain desires of the individual are in conflict with the then dominating standards of conscious life. Therefore these desires are unpleasant and are repressed and remain in the unconscious unsatisfied. Other associated material repressed becomes organized with them until they become powerfully dynamic. Occasionally and under certain circumstances they will break loose into consciousness and dominate the individual. Sometimes the appearance of this material which breaks loose is rather distorted from its original nature, and so may not be readily understood for what it really means. A similar process is assumed, by those

¹⁶ De Sanctis, S., *Religious Conversion*, Chap. 4.

¹⁷ See the author's *Principles of Abnormal Psychology*, Chaps. 6 and 7.

who hold this theory, to be the explanation of the notable transformations which take place in conversion.

During the months or even years prior to the moment of conversion there have been occasional thoughts which, if entertained, would have meant dissatisfaction with the then held beliefs and desires of the individual. Such were rejected, and were repressed into the unconscious. Genuine dissatisfaction gradually developed, but this was earnestly fought against. This fighting with the dissatisfaction meant that the impulse to change was, although still repressed, becoming so strong as to threaten the capacity of consciousness to control. Eventually some circumstances either within or without the individual, or both, result in a giving up. He surrenders to the desire because he can no longer repress it. That which has been repressed now wells into consciousness and is accepted. There is marked relief and notable feeling of peace and joy, this because of the cessation of the strain of the conflict which had been going on. An old set of habits is now displaced by a new which had been in process of organization in the unconscious.

An excellent example of a conversion to which this type of interpretation is readily applicable is reported by Professor Lutoslawski as a personal experience.¹⁸ As a child he had experienced Roman Catholic training, although there were early influences which prevented any very ardent devotion. In youth he was an active student, especially of German philosophy, which resulted in an entire rejection of the church. He became

¹⁸ Lutoslawski, W., "The Conversion of a Psychologist," *Hibbert Journal*, 1922-3, 21, 697-710.

a religious liberal and independent. After reaching mature years there came a period of considerable personal distress with thoughts of the childhood religion intruding. There were redoubled efforts in philosophic study. This the psychoanalyst would be inclined to interpret as a defense mechanism. If it was of such a defensive nature, then there must have been impulses to return to the peace of his childhood faith so strong as to endanger the repressing or inhibiting capacity of the later acquired habits. Finally there came a moment of impulsive action. He rushed to a priest for confession. Presence at mass and communion followed, accompanied by a peace and joy difficult of description. Still he did not feel that he could accept all the philosophy of the church, but he continued to cling loyally to it because of the comfort which the sacraments could bring. Here the unconscious material which finally broke loose and dominated was in part material from childhood. Perhaps that is often the case in adult conversions.

Distasteful and defective as much of the psychoanalytic system may be, one does not need to reject the substance of this interpretation because it has a psychoanalytic flavor. Resisted impulses which grow and eventually dominate were recognized long before the time of Freud and of psychoanalysis. While the interpretation as presented applies best to adult and to the apparently sudden conversion, it requires but a little modification to make it equally applicable to the experiences of adolescence outlined above. In fact, De Sanctis is emphatic in his assertion that all forms of conversion, the slow and the sudden alike, are identical

in their essential nature. While the sudden conversion may be the breaking into immediate domination of a constellation of long resisted or repressed material, the slow conversion may be a succession of resistances and partial acceptances, conversion in a piecemeal or step-by-step manner.

Comparison of this interpretation with what was said above concerning the socialization doctrine will reveal that the two supplement rather than oppose each other. The substitution doctrine offers an explanation of the process by which changes in the course of socialization take place. But the substitution doctrine is equally illuminating when applied to other changes than those commonly termed religious. It can be readily used, as De Sanctis recognizes, to explain the change from one political allegiance to another. Valuable as the socialization and the substitution doctrines are in explaining the course and nature of the conversion change, it must not be forgotten that religious conversion involves the acceptance of beliefs which bring the feel of a better and happier adjustment, not merely to a social environment but to the whole world as it appears to that individual.

Causation.—The causes of conversion deserve further consideration in a psychological study. De Sanctis distinguishes between physiological and psychic causes. The latter group he subdivides into the external psychic causes and the internal. With the physiological, such as disease and fatigue and puberty, he has little to do. In his estimation, these physiological causes become significant only as they acquire a psychic factor. Among external psychic causes he lists the effects of preaching

and reading, the effects of disasters either cosmic or social, and also the effects of prophecies and even of occult practices. Among the internal causes, there is conspicuously the distress of mind which is aroused by meditation or by disease. Doubtless within this grouping all causes or stimuli to the conversion process may be conveniently listed. But it may be instructive to mention a few more specifically.

As the conversion experience has been so often produced in, or in connection with, an evangelistic revival meeting it is well to examine the nature of the procedure used. Both the external and the internal psychic causes of *De Sanctis* will be found operative. By use of song and testimony and dramatic sermonizing the evangelist preacher brings vividly before the youth those same responsibilities of life already discussed. A vivid and high ideal of what one should be is brought clearly to consciousness. What might otherwise have come bit by bit in the life experience of the individual seems now brought all at once and vividly to mind. At the same time every effort is exerted to make the individual feel himself as far beneath these ideals as possible. Regret is stirred over lost opportunities and everything which could possibly be interpreted as waywardness of conduct. The inevitability of punishment for sin is stressed because of its power to arouse fear. Thus the breach between what the youth is or has achieved and what he should be or should achieve in life is made as deep and wide as possible. Such a contrast is certain to arouse feelings of inferiority and the greater the contrast the more intense the inferiority feeling aroused.

Feelings of inferiority are most depressing especially if aroused to high intensity. They may even produce a morbid despair. The normal reaction in everyday life to such a state of abject helplessness is to seek advice from some elder and more competent person, this means the seeking of an opportunity to unburden by telling the trouble to another. The catharsis effect resulting in emotional relief achieved by such confession has long been known. So in the exaggerated state of the revival situation, the individual depressed by thoughts and feelings of inferiority has the natural impulse to talk, or, in the language of religion, to seek relief by confession of sin. But in the confession of sin there is implied another qualitative shading of the experience not necessarily found in the depressed individual who seeks advice and relief by talking to a friend. That additional factor is a feeling of guilt. This consciousness of guilt is added to the experience by the evangelistic preaching and language of his associates. The presence of the feeling of guilt gives also another touch to the confession because it means that through the confession the individual is giving up the past and accepting the new way of life presented. Herein lies the essence of the conversion phenomenon. Forgiveness and relief has been promised to those who confess, and with the confession there is a resolution of the conflict which has been stirred so intensely in the mind of the individual convert. The result is peace, joy, and calm; and especially is there the beginning of a new way of life which is for a time reinforced by new associates. There are thus in the revival meeting technique the necessary features to stimulate (external psy-

chic causes) thoughts which are certain to produce emotional conflicts (internal psychic causes) and to maintain the state until relief is sought through the acceptance of the new and the rejection of the old, the conversion process.

While the *desirability of the conversion experience* may not be a strictly psychological question, it is legitimate for the psychologist to consider if a program for individual development could even theoretically be laid out which would result in the achievement of a mature person, thoroughly adjusted to the world of which he is a part, without having experienced, in some mild degree at least, the process of conversion. To achieve this it would be necessary to establish not only an extraordinarily sound program of religious and moral education, but also to procure such control of the environment of infancy and childhood as would prevent the development of self-centeredness. While theoretically possible, it hardly seems likely of achievement because it would require such an extraordinary amount of knowledge and good judgment, as well as self-restraint, upon the part of parents, an amount indeed scarcely to be expected of human beings.

At the same time it must be recognized that there was a wealth of wisdom in the suggestion brought forward, many years ago, by Coe to the effect that the likelihood of producing the intensified form of the religious conversion was dependent upon the temperament of the individual involved. This was a sound recognition of the fact that individuals achieve their religious adjustments to life through ways conditioned by their own temperamental peculiarities. The well poised,

well inhibited person, be he youth or adult, makes adjustments to life without the extremes of depression and disappointment on the one hand, nor the heights of exaltation on the other. He is so organized that his emotional life is lived within a narrow range. At the other extreme, the loosely inhibited person whose emotions find full play, individuals who are nearly if not quite of the psychoneurotic type of organization, might be expected to achieve adjustment to life only through much storm and stress. They would be more likely to build up the inhibited desires, to suffer the intensities of emotional conflict, and to manifest the more extreme forms of religious conversion. The entire relationship of this to the modern psychology of physical and mental types has yet to be discovered.

It is also necessary to observe that the environment in which the individual grows establishes a predisposition for one or another type of conversion. Clark has shown very well that the absence of religious training, and also a training in the stern doctrines of total depravity, hell and damnation,—both alike prepare the way for a conversion experience of the decisive crisis variety. Careful religious training in the more modern types of religious thought leads to the gradual form of religious awakening.¹⁹ Probably, also, what the type of religious training leads the growing child to expect is profoundly influential. It may of course turn out that the differences in temperament, just mentioned, are produced by these differences in training, but until that can be established it will be necessary to think of these environmental influences as another group of

¹⁹ Clark, E. T., *The Psychology of Religious Awakening*, Chaps. 4 and 5.

factors conditioning the course and nature of the individual's adjustment to life.

Lastly, it is important to attend to the striking similarity between the emotional course described for the conversion experience and that described in the preceding chapters as characteristic of the religious experience. There it will be recalled that the religious experience was found to be some variation of the qualitative change beginning with wonder and possibly fear through inferiority to tenderness. The descriptions given above of the course of the conversion experience present practically the same sequence. At the beginning there was the thoughtful pause in the presence of things religious. If the emotion can be justly called awe, then in all probability it is a fusion of wonder and fear as McDougall suggests. In some instances the fear factor becomes conspicuous. In practically all descriptions of the conversion experience phrases appear which indicate dissatisfaction with self, judgments of personal worthlessness, and the like, which can but indicate a strong influence of the inferiority quality of human feeling. And everywhere there is mentioned the new peace and the feeling of tenderness toward all mankind as its concluding quality. The significance of this will be elaborated in the next chapter.

Sanctification.—Long after conversion many converts enjoy another experience of a religious nature which they describe as a very great blessing. This is commonly designated as sanctification, implying that it is the result of some special act of grace. God is said to have touched these people in a very special manner.

Starbuck presents the best collection of descriptions

of this experience.²⁰ It covers fifty-one cases. Most of these are between thirty and sixty years of age, which will be at once recognized as much later in life than the average age of the conversion phenomenon. The time elapsing between the conversion and the sanctification ranged from two months to forty years. Many of the features presented tend to identify sanctification with conversion. It is reported as something which comes suddenly. It is preceded by a considerable period of longing and discontent. There is a feeling of inadequacy or of incompleteness, as if there were something yet to be achieved in the religious life in order to make it complete and adequate. Sanctification is said to be achieved through faith, self surrender and consecration. The effect of it is a peculiar sense of unity with God.

For a psychological conception of the nature of sanctification, Starbuck related it to the achievement of skill or success in any complicated activity. Every one is familiar with the long struggle to master golf, or the elements of piano playing, or the fundamentals of a foreign language; and of how at last there comes a time when these fundamentals seem to operate automatically. There is a sudden release from the strain of effort. The relief and the consciousness of achievement at last brings a suffusion with self satisfaction which only the initiated can properly appreciate. After conversion, the argument runs, there is a long struggle to achieve the habits of the new life. Eventually, after years maybe, the new way of life becomes so perfectly established that the consciousness of struggle and effort disappears and is replaced by the consciousness of

²⁰ Starbuck, E. D., *Psychology of Religion*, Chap. 29.

achievement. It is this disappearance of strain and the awareness of final achievement which is described as sanctification.

One should observe also that this sanctification presents all of the characteristics of conversion and of any complete religious experience. There is the awareness of personal insufficiency and the consciousness of a better way. There are the feelings of inferiority and, as it clearly involves the consciousness of God, there must be some of the wonder emotion. There may be a touch of fear, if not of God then of the consequences of continuing in the inadequate manner. There is the complete resignation, the giving up of the old and full acceptance of the new, followed by joy and peace and tenderness. E. Stanley Jones has recently described a most vivid personal experience of this.²¹ After a long struggle which sorely affected his health, he eventually reached the point of throwing over the old and launching out with what he had come to believe was God's way for him. All the features of sanctification appear in his description, and when itemized they appear as the same which characterize conversion.

It seems proper then to suggest that sanctification is but another form of intensified religious experience. It might be called a second conversion, but that would place too great emphasis upon conversion, which is itself but another intensification of the religious experience. Circumstances contribute very largely to the production of both conversion and sanctification, but there is also the possibility that temperament has something to do with it as well. Starbuck found that

²¹ Jones, E. Stanley, *The Christ of the Indian Road*, Chap. 1.

of two hundred and thirty-seven people who had experienced religious growth without the conversion experience none had enjoyed sanctification. And it will be remembered that these people who did not experience conversion are nevertheless religious people. They have religious experiences, but not in the intensified form of conversion or sanctification. If a person had never experienced conversion and somewhere later in life did have an intense religious experience, it would doubtless be described as conversion merely because he had never had such before. But if a person later in life has an intense religious experience and has formerly had one which had been classed as conversion, and since then has led a religious life, the second experience obviously cannot be called conversion and so another name is found for it and another religious interpretation is accorded to it.

Through sanctification and conversion together more light is thrown on the religious experience than would be possible through either alone. If only conversion appeared, that is, if religiously minded people never had but one such experience, then one might suspect that there was something peculiar about it. But the fact that religious people may have at least two such in addition to their regular experiences of prayer and worship makes it far less likely that either is of a special and peculiar nature. And, furthermore, when it is recognized that the essentials of conversion and sanctification and religious worship are all the same, then it becomes more than ever probable that they are at base all the same kind of human behavior. The circumstances in which they occur, the temperament of

the individuals, and the religious interpretations accorded produce the differentiating features. Starbuck's suggestion of maturation or achievement as a factor in the production of sanctification would be, if he is right, but a feature of the setting which brings about that particular intensification of the religious experience. If there is some supernatural factor involved, that is by definition beyond the scope of this study.

CHAPTER IX

RELIGIOUS ECSTATIC STATES: "POWER" STATES, PROPHECY, MYSTICISM

The attention of the reader has so far been drawn primarily to the change of attitude or adjustment in the religious experience, and to the characteristics of the emotional accompaniment. It has been pointed out that there may be a wide range of difference in the beliefs accepted, and in the relative prominence of the different emotional factors. Now it is necessary to observe that there are also vast differences in the intensity of the experience.

Corresponding differences of intensity may be seen in any emotional reaction. One may be mildly afraid or one may be terrorized into most irrational conduct. In a given situation one person may experience merely a slight repugnance, while another may be disgusted to the point of nausea. Similar intensity differences may be observed also in more complex emotional reactions. Hatred may range between a mildly persistent antipathy and a murderous vengefulness. Love may be experienced as a quietly pleasing affection, as an utterly engulfing rapturousness, or as any degree of excitement between those extremes.

The ordinary religious experience is but mild in its intensity aspect. While there may be a touch of fear in the worshipful state of mind, no one expects to have

fear so aroused by the act of worship as to threaten one's reason or to disturb one's self control. The worshiper expects to have the emotion of tenderness aroused, but rarely is one stirred to tears by it. At the same time, it is impossible to read the literature of religion or to devote much time to the observation of religious behavior without soon becoming aware of the existence of many instances of religious experience raised to a degree of intensity so great as to put them far beyond ordinary worship. It is these instances of religious behavior, wherein the emotions are extraordinarily prominent, which are to be thought of as religious ecstasies.

The most famous forms of religious ecstatic states are those which have been developed by the religious mystics. With them the consciousness of God and the tenderness of ordinary worship is highly magnified. They have described it as a happy communion with God. Evangelistic revival meetings have also often produced joyous exaggerations of the religious experience which are clearly ecstatic. So too is the behavior of those who "get the power" in the faith healing and the devotional meetings of several contemporary sects. The inspired states of the Quakers and of the prophets, in which they believed themselves used as mouthpieces of God, present features sufficiently like the others to justify their inclusion in this group. It is these which must be examined in detail. But first it is necessary to understand the psychology of ecstasy.

Normal Emotional Control.—In the ordinary affairs of everyday life, emotions are more or less checked or inhibited. They are not permitted free and unhampered

expression because it is not considered proper to do so. The daily experiences of anger and disgust and displeasure and joy and relief and the like are regularly inhibited. The mechanism by which this inhibition operates is not fully known, but it is certainly brought into being by the effects of education and individual training. A situation in childhood days may stir grief and unhampered crying. The same situation in mature years may stir quite the same emotion and a corresponding impulse to cry, but the experiences of life have built into the nervous organization patterns of functioning which check such reactions in the adult.

Sometimes people grow up with little of that kind of training which provides these inhibiting patterns. They have grown to maturity in a relatively undisciplined fashion. Emotionally they react much like children. Such people are not well organized nervously; their behavior patterns are not well synthesized or integrated. Their organization is so loose that any emotion aroused can be stirred to full intensity with little hindrance. Such people are often said to be more emotional than others, although the difference is probably more in the visibility of their emotional reactions and in the degree of control than in their frequency.

In every well trained person there is thus a conflict between the inhibiting mechanisms and the emotions which are aroused by the contacts of life. If an individual is healthy, rested and has a well organized nervous system, the inhibitory patterns are likely to dominate. But even such a person may not always succeed in controlling his emotions. If a situation arouses anger and that situation persists, or is fre-

quently recurrent, the well organized man may be able to keep his anger in check for a while; but there is a danger that eventually the anger will become too much for him, that it will break out in spite of his inhibitions. When a person is much fatigued, emotional control is proportionately reduced. The much discussed "shell shock" cases were instances of people whose capacity for inhibition had been seriously reduced by overwork and loss of sleep, while at the same time they were obliged to carry on as well as they could in an environment which continued to stimulate their emotions. Eventually the inhibitions gave way and they were swamped by the emotions and their accompanying impulses. Such failures of control may be produced by a variety of circumstances; and it will also be found that there are great individual differences in ability to maintain control.

The Ecstatic State.—This supplies an important factor for the explanation of the ecstatic state. First of all, it is one in which an emotion has broken loose or is allowed free rein. But at the same time it must be recognized that all instances of uninhibited emotionality are not ecstasies. The nature or the quality of the emotion is important. When anger breaks loose, the condition is not called ecstatic. Nor would anyone think of calling ecstatic that condition of mind when one is engulfed by fear. But a person so overwhelmed by joyous love would be readily described as in a state of ecstasy. So would a person who is dominated by the emotional reactions to a great musical composition. On the whole, it is probably safe to say that an emotionally dominated state may be called ecstatic when the dominating emotion is pleasant.

The difference between the ordinary experience of pleasant emotion and the ecstatic experience is not easy of statement. Unfortunately the psychology of ecstasy has never been well worked out. But certainly there is a difference of degree. The ordinary experience of emotion is more or less checked. Where the distinction lies between strong emotion and ecstasy cannot be exactly defined, and it may be for present purposes unimportant. Perhaps there is also some other effect of the inhibitions, so that when they are weak or released the emotional experience takes on a different character, but about this it is possible only to guess.

Psychologists have often commented upon the limitation of thought which seems to be characteristic of people in the ecstatic state. They do not apparently have the normal range of ideas and associations. They are limited to a few notions. Stress has also been placed upon a certain limitation of bodily movement in the ecstasy. But such a lack of movement is probably not a characteristic feature. Certainly there are some ecstasies in which there is considerable movement. In all probability the amount of movement and its nature is related to the nature of the ideas which are in mind during the ecstasy. Ordinarily these are not ideas which involve much movement, although there are exceptions. The limitation of thought is more important and is related to what was said above concerning the reduction of inhibition. If there were a full normal capacity for thought, there would be the normal capacity to inhibit. Both are related to cerebral organization, while the emotion patterns belong to lower levels. A certain indifference of the ecstatic to what is going

on about him has also been emphasized as a characteristic feature. Both the observed behavior of ecstasies and their own descriptions give evidence of this indifference. It is most noticeable in the more extreme of the ecstatic states. This must also be a part of that disturbed condition which reduces control and gives free rein to the lower level emotional responses. Dominance by emotion prevents the normal functioning of both perception and thought. It is notorious that most people when they are emotionally excited do not think normally.

If this conception of ecstasy is correct, then it follows that there may be a great variety of ecstatic states. Many different degrees of reduced inhibition are possible, and there are many different kinds of inhibiting organizations which suffer reduction because of the many different kinds of life experience. And then there is a very great variety of emotions which can dominate in ecstatic states. Thus ecstasy becomes a term which is broadly inclusive. Here of course attention must be directed primarily to those forms of ecstasy which involve the religious experience.

Conversion Ecstasies.—The interested student should not fail to read first hand reports of the extreme forms of conversion phenomena which have appeared from time to time especially in this country.¹ In them he will find records of the prolonged expectation with which revival meetings were anticipated, of the wild

¹ Davenport, F. M., *Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals*. New York. Macmillan, 1905. Pp. 323. Catherine C., *The Great Revival in the West*. Chicago University Press, 1916. Pp. 215.

This material has also been vividly presented in fictional form by W. D. Howells in *The Leatherstocking* God.

impassioned singing and testifying, of preaching which fascinated and stirred emotions profoundly. Persons with such anticipation and so stimulated would soon lose much of their self control. They would be less and less inhibited as they came more and more under the spell of the situation. To this must be added the suggestive effects of seeing others in ecstatic states shouting, singing, jumping, jerking, and even rolling on the floor. These are remarkable records of unimpeded emotional development. Complete abandon was expected, desired, sought, and deemed a praiseworthy achievement. The reduction of control or inhibition is here by deliberate abandonment of control.

“Power” States.—Perhaps the best examples of these can be seen in contemporary faith-healing meetings. Long before the day and hour of the actual healing service arrives, the emotions of the sick are profoundly stirred by advertising, preaching and neighborhood gossip. Those selected for the “healing line” are taken through preliminary meetings in which they are interviewed, catalogued, and prayed with. By the time the anticipated evening arrives their emotions have been repeatedly stirred and their capacity to hold themselves in check somewhat reduced by fatigue. The procedure in the final meeting is well designed to bring those who seek the healing to a high pitch of excitement. There is much singing and much impassioned preaching. Then there are testimonies by those who have gone under “the power” in previous meetings and claim to have been healed. These have much to say of the power of the Lord and of how joyously happy they were in being overcome by it.

All this has the effect of holding the attention, stirring expectation in a very definite manner, retracting the field of consciousness and preparing for a willing submission to some overwhelming supernatural event. In other words, this is but a preparation of the individual for a complete relinquishment of self control when the proper moment comes. Then the "healing line" is established and each sees those ahead being one by one overcome by the "power" and hears the announcement that they are now happy and healed of their ills. By the time each reaches the front of the line and stands at last before the great preacher himself, all is prepared for a grand emotional explosion; and that is just what occurs. The intelligent observer will see such people fall into cataleptic and convulsive states which are afterwards described by them as something peculiarly ineffable.

In meetings of this kind there are not infrequently individuals scattered through the audience who fall into the "power" state. They come not to be healed, nor to be converted; they may have had those experiences already. They come merely to be in such meetings, to participate in the singing and the praying and the shouting, and this they do with such abandon as to lose control and be overcome by their joyous emotions. Similar states may be seen also in the devotional meetings of some sects.

Prophetic States.—These manifest also some degree of that which may properly be called ecstatic. Differences between prophetic states and those already described will be found in the quality of the emotion aroused and in the accompanying ideas. The emotion which produces prophetic ecstasy is a highly complex

pattern aroused by much meditation upon the ethical and political wrongs of the contemporary generation. Such meditation and such emotional excitement prepares for the ecstatic state. If the individual remains well controlled, the utterances are less impassioned. Great prophetic utterances are, however, recognized as the product of relatively unimpeded emotional expression. Obviously the development of the emotion could not be entirely unimpeded or coherent expression in intelligible phrases would be lost. Perhaps control is entirely lost in the condition of those who have been called "mad" prophets.

It might at first be thought that the feeling aroused by meditation upon the sins of a people would be unpleasant and thus produce a condition contrary to the definition of ecstasy given above; but it must never be forgotten that the nature of an emotional reaction is in large part determined by the interpretation which accrues to perceptions and thoughts. With the prophets, that interpretation was in terms of divine influence. They thought themselves inspired by Jehovah, that they were made the mouthpieces of God. They believed themselves to have been especially "called," and yet they often used external means, dancing and music and wine, as aids to the production of the ecstatic state. Incongruous as the combination of such an interpretation with such a resort to artificial aids may seem to the critically minded, they are, nevertheless, harmonious in that they both tend to arouse pleasant feelings. It thus seems safe to assume that the prophetic state is agreeable to the prophet, no matter how disagreeable his utterances may be to others.

The ecstatic nature of the prophetic state was long ago recognized by the great Hebrew philosopher, Moses Maimonides. He pointed out that prophets differ among themselves in the degree of their experience, but that to all of them prophetic thoughts came much as do thoughts in a dream. In this prophetic state there was trembling of the body and the powers of thought seemed often to be unbalanced. No prophet, said Maimonides, could prophesy at any time he might desire. The state had to be prepared for by the utilization of whatever contributed to "exultation and hearty contentment."²

Inspirational States, or periods of special possession, present some features which are much like those of prophecy. Here the term inspiration is used without implication of the problems involved in the inspiration of the scriptures. Many authors and artists have described the experience of being dominated or possessed by some impulse or plan or design. The conception comes sometimes gradually and sometimes suddenly and with something about it which makes it appear as peculiarly impersonal in origin. They are likely to believe themselves to have been working under the direction of some power not their own. Some have thought this best explained as the uprush of a mass of ideas and feelings which had become organized in the unconscious,

² The psychologically minded student of prophecy will find the following serviceable—Kaplan, J. H., *The Psychology of Prophecy*. Phila., Greenstone, 1908, Pp. xii, 148 (contains valuable bibliography); Maimonides, Moses, *Mishna Torah Yod Ha-Hazakah*, Chap. 7 (trans. by S. Glazer) New York, Maimonides Pub. Co., 1927; Mordell, A., *The Literature of Ecstasy*, New York, Boni & Liveright, 1921, Pp. viii, 262; Povah, J. W., *The Old Testament and Modern Problems in Psychology*, Chap. 3, London, Longmans, 1926, Pp. viii, 151.

eventually breaking loose as repressed complexes are supposed by the psychoanalysts to break loose in hysterical seizures. Others have thought it to be the effect of an influence from without, the touch of an artistic muse, the control of a spirit, or what not. Where such an experience is concerned with ideas alone, as in the solution of a mathematical problem, there can be little of the ecstatic about it; but where there is much emotion involved it would certainly approximate ecstasy.

Mysticism.—Some there are who for religious reasons object to the consideration of mysticism as a form of ecstasy, but the descriptions available permit no other classification. Just what mysticism is, its causes, the nature of the state, its religious values, its relation to other forms of experience and the like are questions which have long been debated. The literature is incredibly extensive and often extremely difficult to understand. Most of it is written by enthusiastic devotees, or by those whose background is theological or philosophical and certainly not scientific. Consequently the descriptions are not such as will satisfy the psychologist. Inge³ has supplied a collection of twenty-six definitions none of which can be accepted as clearly psychological. Coe⁴ gives a list of seven which are not much more helpful. Pratt⁵ defines mysticism as the "sense of a presence of a being or reality" and this through other means than the usual processes of sense perception. Such a definition, it will be observed, makes

³ Inge, W. R., *Christian Mysticism*. Appendix A.

⁴ Coe, G. A., *The Psychology of Religion*. Page 263.

⁵ Pratt, J. B., *The Religious Consciousness*. Page 337.

of mysticism a purely cognitive experience. Underhill,⁶ on the contrary, stoutly maintains that emotion is essential to mysticism. Leuba⁷ shrewdly avoids such troubles by accepting the term mysticism as a designation for any state described by the person who had it as a "union of the self with a larger-than-self," whatever that something "larger-than-self" happens to be called. For psychological purposes Leuba's mode of definition is doubtless wise. Then one may proceed to a description and an analysis without prejudice. What mystics experience is of course of far greater importance than how the true mystical state is to be defined.

The rhapsodic language in which the mystic state is ordinarily described is both tantalizing and confusing to the psychologist. It is first of all obvious that those who have attempted description have had some sort of experience which was rare if not unique in their lives. Untrained in the language of exact description of mental states and processes, they have resorted to figures of speech which are at once both impressive and vague. Their descriptions are filled with the language of that particular theology in which they happen to have been schooled. The experience itself seems not peculiar to any time nor to any religion. It is reported from many lands, in many different religious environments, and in many periods of history.⁸

⁶ Underhill, Evelyn, *Mysticism*, Chap. 4.

⁷ Leuba, J. H., *Psychology of Religious Mysticism*. Page 1.

⁸ For introduction to this literature one may wisely begin with the following—Butler, E. Cuthbert, *Western Mysticism*, London, Constable, 1922, Pp. xiii, 344; Dunlap, K., *Mysticism, Freudianism and Scientific Psychology*, St. Louis, Mosley, 1920, Pp. 173; Howley, John, *Psychology and the Mystical Experience*, London, K. Paul, 1920, Pp. 275; Inge, W. R., *Christian Mysticism*, London, Methuen, 1899, Pp. 379; Leuba, J. H.,

The extreme form of the mystical state is ordinarily of rather short duration. While this condition of complete absorption and oblivion for things mundane may continue for several hours, such prolonged instances are less frequently reported. One certain feature of it is a notable retraction of the field of consciousness. There is a failure to respond to sensory stimulation and a forgetfulness of the matters of ordinary routine. The mystics themselves tell of this loss of awareness of the outside world. This makes the condition comparable to some extent to that of very close attention and in a way to absent-mindedness. When this abstraction eliminates the consciousness of contact with the floor or whatever the person is resting upon, then the mystic has the experience of floating or levitation. Most readers will at once recall the well known instances of levitation consciousness in dreams and in partial anesthesia.⁹ Hallucinations of sight or sound or of movement may appear, but the great mystics did not consider these as of first importance. Perhaps they are not conspicuous features of the mystic state. The mystic may remain standing or kneeling, in whatever position was assumed at the outset, or he may fall to the floor and lie as if in a trance.

Psychology of Religious Mysticism, New York, Harcourt, 1925, Pp. xii, 336; Pratt, J. B., *The Religious Consciousness*, Chaps. 16-20, New York, Macmillan, 1926, Pp. 488; Underhill, Evelyn, *Mysticism* (note the historical outline and bibliography in appendix) New York, Dutton, 1911, Pp. 600; Underhill, Evelyn, *The Mystic Way*, New York, Dutton, 1914, Pp. 395; von Hügel, Friedrich, *The Mystical Element of Religion*, London, Dent, 1923, 2 Vols.

One should also read some classic first hand description such as *The Autobiography of St. Theresa*, or *St. Theresa's Interior Castle*, or *The Dark Night of the Soul* by St. John of the Cross.

⁹ See the author's *Principles of Abnormal Psychology*, p. 342.

Just what is present in consciousness at such times cannot be determined with much certainty. There is great difference of opinion. An acute and sympathetic analyst, Howley, describes by negation. He says that all discursive thinking ceases and that feelings, sensations and images are repressed. But without thought or sensation or feeling or image there could be no consciousness at all. Thus Howley's statement cannot be taken literally. He contends, it is true, that the feelings which the mystics have described really follow the apical moment of mysticism. With this it is hard to agree. The mystics have told so much about the extreme happiness, the pervading joy, the love of God, the consciousness of God's presence, and the like, one is rather inclined to accept their statements as applying to the most important features of the mystical experience. The affective toning which they describe is that of pleasantness, and it will be recalled that ecstasy was presented as a pleasant state. Some have warned the would-be mystic that the mystic way was not all joy. Apparently, however, the painful experiences are not in the mystic state itself, although St. Catherine of Sienna ¹⁰ indicates that they are so at times, but are usually intermediate, especially where there is failure to achieve that high union with the divine so much sought for.

The course by which mystical union is achieved is, as described by the mystics themselves, most informing. Very detailed directions are given for training in the habits of meditation and prayer. This must lead progressively to an elimination of all distracting thoughts

¹⁰ See the description by von Hügel in his *Mystical Element of Religion*.

and sensory responses. The method is that of much practice and determined effort. The effect must be the reinforcement of certain neurone patterns and such an organization of them as to make them wholly dominant when once activated. To what extent there is a dissociation of these patterns from the rest of the personality organization one can scarcely guess, although one may suspect that there is much. This sort of training is continued until the undisturbed meditation upon certain selected religious topics is in turn superseded by states of contemplation. When contemplation is achieved the subject may then attend for a considerable period to a single topic. With the passing from meditation into contemplation discursive thought is said to disappear. Experts in mysticism recognize that this is difficult, as anyone versed in the psychology of attention knows full well, and frequently the mystic in training is advised to consider different phases or aspects of the same thought as an aid to the maintenance of the contemplation. Sometimes this stage is called the prayer of quiet (St. Theresa).

Beyond contemplation the exceptionally adept achieve a later or higher phase in which the self is said to be suppressed. It is described as the mergence of the individual in the divine. This is the mystic state proper, the rapturous ecstatic goal of the mystic way. St. Theresa called it the prayer of union. It is about the marvelous joy of this experience that so much has been written which is figurative and elusive. The world and the flesh, all consciousness of sin in any form, is by the trained conditions of attention eliminated. All thought that is not of God is inhibited. It is not

difficult to believe those who say that they are in this state overcome by the love of God and are aware of nothing else. While the course by which this is achieved is not always divided into quite the same stages ¹¹ and there are variations in the form of presentation, the goal is always the same.

Quaker Ecstasies.—Before turning to the interpretation of these ecstatic states it is well to observe that there have been movements which emphasized milder forms of what has often been called mysticism. One of the most conspicuous examples, and a very instructive one, is that of the Society of Friends. As most readers doubtless know, their habits of worship are designed to afford each worshiper an adequate opportunity for quiet meditation and waiting in anticipation of some influence upon the mind from a divine source. Their meetinghouses are bare of everything which might catch the eye, the men and women sit in separate sections of the house, costumes are identical and unattractive, there is no formal ritual of music or prayer or preaching, and such meetings may take place in complete silence from beginning to end. If any member of the gathering feels impelled to speak, or to pray, or to sing, he does so, and this is interpreted as an impulse growing out of the communion with the divine. One of the early Quakers, Robert Barclay,¹² has left an excellent description and argument for this type of worship. It is notably similar to the procedure for achieving the mystic state; but it lacks the systematic meditation,

¹¹ For a serviceable summary of these consult J. H. Leuba's *Psychology of Religious Mysticism*, Chap. 6.

¹² *An Apology for the True Christian Divinity*. See section called the "Eleventh Proposition."

and there seems to be no advocacy of that complete loss of the consciousness of self described by the great mystics.

Evidence of the ecstatic type of reduced control and of concentration upon a few thoughts with their accompanying emotion appears, however, in Barclay's description. He records how individuals in their meetings would be so profoundly stirred by the awfulness of their own sins that they would struggle to overcome the evil and that this struggle would be manifested in a "trembling and a motion of the body." While this could not of course be a pleasant experience and would therefore not be strictly ecstasy, it indicates a reduction of control which prepares for the ecstasy to come. Barclay speaks further of "pangs and groans" and eventually, as the battle with sin is won, the coming of "a sweet sound of thanksgiving and praise." This last appears to be much like the achievements of the mystics after the struggle to eliminate sin had been passed.

CHAPTER X

RELIGIOUS ECSTATIC STATES: INTER- PRETATIONS OF MYSTICISM

By far the largest part of the literature on mysticism presents the *supernatural interpretation*. In the extreme form of the mystical state the mystic is said to be "at one with the infinite," in a state of "oneness with the Absolute," enjoying a "perfect union" with God, the state of "Pure Being" is achieved, "absorbed in divine love," an "utter transformation of the soul in God," and many other expressions of like purport.

In the discussion of such statements it is again necessary to keep the field of psychology clearly in mind. With the supernatural, with theology and with the discussion of religious values, psychology has no quarrel. And the individual psychologist may in addition to his psychology accept and believe very much of that literature of the supernatural, of theology and of religious values. But, as a psychologist, he is limited to the description of the conscious states and processes and to the behavior of the individual. All this must be related to the interpretative concepts of psychology. Perhaps in the mystic state the individual may be "absorbed in the All"; but even so, it is the business of the psychologist to describe that peculiar state of consciousness, if he can, and to describe the behavior of the individual in relation to it. Possibly the Quaker

in the absorbed state of his meeting does receive a direct inspiration from God in the form of an "inner light"; but the psychologist must confine his description to the manner in which it appears in consciousness, and to all the attending circumstances. Perhaps one may prefer to accept, with William James, the theory that by way of the subconscious man and God come into direct communication, and that inspirations and mystical experiences are intrusions from that divinely inspired subconscious. But, even so, the psychologist's task is still that of describing and classifying the course of consciousness and the attendant behavior. Even though one conclude that some of these mystical states are hysterical seizures in a highly psychoneurotic organism, it is still quite possible that the mystic may enjoy a peculiarly intimate relationship to God, or the Soul of the Universe, or the All, or the Absolute, or whatever characterization of the superhuman may be preferred.

The Consciousness of a Presence.—Pratt thinks that the essential feature of the mystical state is the "sense of a presence" and that efforts at interpretation must concentrate upon it. He gives a number of descriptions by persons who have had personal experience with that peculiar consciousness.¹ No one who reads these and other descriptions will long doubt that they are genuinely indicative of some peculiar awareness of a presence. The most unusual feature is the absence of any apparent cause for it. Mystics assert that they

¹ Pratt, J. B., *The Religious Consciousness*, Chap. 16. In this connection one should also read James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 59-63.

become as clearly aware of the presence of God as, in any contact of daily life, they are aware of the presence of another human being. But in this mystical state the consciousness of presence is not accompanied or preceded by any form of sensory perception. God is not seen, nor heard, nor touched. There is only this confident awareness of the presence of God.

In thinking of it, as a human experience for psychological interpretation, one should recall the ordinary experience of the presence of another where there is the actual perception of some other person. The sight and sound of the presence of another person in the same room are but small parts of what goes on in the individual who has such perceptions. If one watches one's self carefully at such times, one will discover a very large amount of muscular adjustment, that which might be called a comprehensive motor attitude. The existence of this can perhaps best be recognized by observing the alteration in the motor attitude when the other person leaves the room. Close introspection will also reveal in most cases certain feelings, or even mild emotional features. The consciousness of the presence of another person is then an elaborate pattern of motor and organic attitudes, along with the sensory perceptions.

Sometimes this consciousness of a presence can be aroused in an illusory fashion. Now and then people awake from normal sleep with the consciousness of a presence in the room. Careful examination of the room reveals nothing which will arouse the visual and auditory perceptions necessary to make the experience complete; consequently, the motor and organic pattern

which is normally a part of the consciousness of a presence and which had somehow been activated will, lacking perceptual support, soon disappear. Blind people relate many experiences of this kind. Often they become aware of the presence of another without being able to designate any sensation or perception as the stimulus for it. There has been no sound of a voice and no physical contact. In fact many blind people have this experience so often that it becomes a source of much discomfort.

The explanation is to be found best in what Professor Hollingworth has so ably presented as "redintegration."² When any large pattern has become well established in the nervous system, the stimulation of some small part of it, even though obscurely, may be sufficient to activate the whole. The ticking of a watch is alone sufficient to stir the full perception of a watch. So the sound of a friend's voice may be sufficient to arouse the whole pattern of the consciousness of his presence. The sound of a light footfall may do the same. The illusory experiences of the blind can undoubtedly be explained in this manner. Some very slight sound, not perceived in isolation, is sufficient to activate the consciousness of a presence which, because of the peculiar life the blind must lead, is easily activated at any time.

Even more important is it to observe that this same pattern may be stimulated into activity by thinking of the proper topics. Sensory excitation is not necessary to it. Some central stimulus can set it into function as

² Hollingworth, H. L., *Psychology: Its Facts and Principles*, Chaps. 1, 4, 5, 6. New York, Appleton, 1928.

well as a peripheral. Thinking intently and with longing of some lost or absent loved one has often been sufficient to stir an uncanny consciousness of his presence. When one wakes from sleep with such a consciousness, the stimulus for the activation of the pattern may be found in some recent but forgotten dream.

The application of all this to the experiences of presence reported by the mystics is simple. The Quaker sitting in his meeting thinks steadily of God, and he believes in God as a personal being. The attention is close and the field of consciousness is retracted. Other perceptions and conceptions are shut out. Thus it would be quite possible for the thoughts of God to activate that pattern which had been established by many experiences of physical personal presences, the redintegrative process, and thus arouse the consciousness of a presence. The circumstances lead to its interpretation as the presence of God. The mystic who meditates upon the attributes of the personality of God and passes from that into a steady contemplation of some one attribute might likewise have the consciousness of a personal presence stimulated by those very thoughts. The extreme state of mysticism, which has been so vaguely described, and by some said to be quite beyond human description, may be a condition of domination by this consciousness of a presence and the love emotions which have also been aroused by the nature of the thoughts contemplated.

If, however, one prefers to think of God as a personal entity separate from the earth and human beings and other creations, a God with whom in mystical states contact and communion is possible, then but a slight

shift of the interpretation is necessary. In such a case the meditation and the contemplation are pleasing to God and as a special blessing He comes near to the contemplating person and makes the finite human to become aware of His presence by directly stimulating that pattern which will produce the consciousness of presence. The difference between this presentation and that of the preceding paragraph is fundamentally not one of psychology at all. It is one of theology. One system of theology would make it necessary to accept the explanation of this paragraph, another system would necessitate the acceptance of the explanation given above. It must be recognized also that able theologians have frequently contended that this consciousness of a presence has been often misinterpreted. They have charged that certain self-styled mystics were not experiencing the presence of God, but were experiencing the presence and the influence of the Devil; and that others were being misled by a hypnotic-like absorption. The problem in any given case is thus one of determining what particular stimulus activates the consciousness of presence.

It is further important to observe another state which is presented by the orthodox as the ultimate goal of mystical endeavor. The language in which it is described is not very illuminating. It is termed the "unitive life," "spiritual marriage," and a continuous "presence of God."³ This condition is presented as a special blessing which follows much practice of the

³ See Evelyn Underhill's *Mysticism*, Chap. 10; J. H. Leuba's *Psychology of Religious Mysticism*, Chap. 11; and St. Theresa's *Interior Castle, Seventh Mansions*.

“mystic way.” It is not strictly an ecstatic state. The individual goes about the activities of everyday life and in them may be highly efficient; but the life of the individual seems to be characterized by a persisting consciousness of presence which is of course described as the consciousness of the presence of God. A Carmelite brother of the seventeenth century, Brother Lawrence, has left what is one of the most serviceable descriptions ⁴ of this kind of life. He served as cook in his community and relates in a beautifully simple fashion his abiding consciousness of the presence of God. He says that he was as clearly conscious of that presence while at work in his kitchen as he was when at Mass. Whatever be the theological background of one’s interpretation, it must be admitted that such a state can only be the consequence of much effortful meditation and the establishment of such habits of thought as will keep the idea of God almost constantly in mind. If one lives with the thought of God continually functioning in the interpretation of every contact of life, it is easy to understand how one could have an almost constant consciousness of the presence of God. Most people live with the thought of a job or a boss, or the search for pleasure, or how to make a living as the dominant idea and the basis of interpretation. After such habits have been established by years of repetition, it is not surprising if many other years of effort should be necessary to establish the habit of living with the thought of God as constantly present.

Mysticism and Mental Disease.—Much evidence of mental and nervous instability has been detected in the

⁴ See *The Practice of the Presence of God*.

lives of great mystics. Because of this some have thought it necessary to condemn all mysticism as the product of abnormal minds. Students of mental phenomena have thought that an adequate explanation of mysticism could be made through their knowledge of psychopathology.⁵ Great mystics have themselves recognized the abnormalities which they themselves, or those under their direction, were prone to develop. St. Catherine of Genoa recognized pathological traits in herself, and St. Theresa frequently warns against such developments. That unusual if not abnormal and pathological phenomena have appeared in the lives of at least some of the mystics is not then to be denied. One should, rather, seek to understand the relationship of these abnormalities to the mystical experience.

Abnormality must not, however, be interpreted as meaning insanity. The term insanity is coming more and more to designate a social and legal distinction. Persons may suffer a very serious mental illness and not be technically insane. Of mental abnormalities there are a great variety. Some diseased minds are badly deluded and have all their interpretations of life colored by their delusions. Some suffer such abnormalities of the emotions as to have their thoughts and interpretations distorted by them. Some suffer a progressive dementia. But it is not with these forms of abnormality that the student of mysticism and the religious ecstasies is most concerned. There are also those disturbances called psychoneurotic. Hysterical disturbances, great suggestibility, trance states, ob-

⁵ See J. H. Leuba's *Psychology of Religious Mysticism*, Chaps. 4, 5, and 8; and also Max Nordau's *Degeneration*, Part II.

sessions, phobias, "shell shock," multiple personality, and the like fall in this class. People who suffer these are said to have a weakly or poorly synthesized nervous organization. Perhaps this is a condition innately determined and incurable. As a consequence of this weak organization, the stresses of life are not well met, the emotional experiences are unduly disturbing. The individual struggles to get on in a world for which he is not well fitted. Conflicts, repressions, complexes, dissociations develop. The individual is maladjusted and maladjustments accumulate. Self control is notably defective. Then there are the many kinds of epilepsy, some of which are conspicuous for their development of ecstatic states.⁶

Of the many presentations of abnormality in the lives of the mystics Leuba's is the most complete and the most technically correct. He shows clearly the poor control, the emotional instability, the maladjustment, and occasionally the appearance of epileptic-like seizures. But he has thrown a heavy emphasis upon the sexual factor in these abnormalities. If one has not time to read the longer presentations⁷ one should at least read those admirable summaries of the lives of the mystics which Leuba⁸ has provided. In them one finds many details which are quite familiar to students of psychoneurotic conditions. Nervous and fearful and

⁶ See the author's *Principles of Abnormal Psychology*, especially Chaps. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

⁷ See von Hügel's presentation of the life of St. Catherine of Genoa in his *Mystical Element of Religion*; also T. Flournoy's article, "Une mystique moderne," *Archive de Psychologie*, 1915, 15, 174-176, and J. H. Leuba's "A Modern Mystic" in the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* 1920, 15, 209-223.

⁸ Leuba, J. H., *Psychology of Religious Mysticism*.

unstable adolescents trying to understand and articulate with life marry and enter upon harrowing experiences of domestic infelicity and new struggles to make life sufferable. These are supplemented or aggravated by struggles with theology and notions of religious duty. As a means of escape, or as another attempt at life adjustment, religious orders of one kind or another are entered and their vows taken. Satisfying religious experiences of a mystical nature are achieved, only to be followed by periods when they cannot at will be repeated (periods of "dryness" as they are curiously called). Again there is unhappiness and more struggle. Von Hügel says that St. Catherine of Genoa became a saint to "prevent herself going to pieces." Others have thought that she became a saint because she went to pieces.

Defects in Pathological Theory.—Objections to these pathological interpretations are not wanting. Pratt wisely points out that one conspicuous feature of the typically hysterical person is a high suggestibility, and that another is a corresponding lack of self determination, or "weakness of will." The famous mystics have not, however, been peculiarly responsive to any and all kinds of suggestions; and they have long been famous for their notable determination and perseverance in the pursuit of righteousness. De Sanctis has called attention to the fact that hystericals suffer amnesia for events which occur during their hysterical seizures;⁹ yet the mystics have written much about

⁹ For these criticisms see J. B. Pratt's *The Religious Consciousness*, pp. 463-466, and S. De Sanctis' *Religious Conversion*, Chap. 7. For the characteristics of the hysterical personality see P. Janet's *Major Symptoms of Hysteria*, and for a general presentation of hysteria and its interpretations see the author's *Principles of Abnormal Psychology*, Chap. 7.

their most rapturous states. They complain of the difficulty of description, because of the uniqueness of the experience, but not of amnesia. Then, too, the evidence of hallucinations in the experience of the mystics must be taken most cautiously. Many of the descriptions make these experiences appear to be more of the nature of pseudo-hallucinations than of hallucinations proper.¹⁰ They resemble the pseudo-hallucinations of the normal dream, and it may be that they are dream-like realizations of wishes and longings more apparent in earlier stages of the "mystic way."

Interpretations of the great mystics in terms of hysteria have placed much emphasis upon the language of love which appears so noticeably in their writings. Hysterical phenomena are often related to abnormalities of the sex life, and psychoanalysts have been prone to think that they always were so related. Thus if a particular interpreter were especially familiar with the psychopathology of hysteria he might be most impressed by the mystic's use of the language of love and conclude, as some have, that mystical states were to be traced to sexual abnormalities. There are, however, dangers to be guarded against. The experiences of the specialists in mentally diseased conditions during the late war revealed many instances of hysteria which could not be traced to a sex factor. And it should be further observed that the use of love language by the mystics can be easily overemphasized. St. Augustine made much use of musical terms in his efforts at description and St. Theresa frequently used the language of courts and of court etiquette.

¹⁰ See the author's *Principles of Abnormal Psychology*, pp. 37-38.

Finally it must be recognized that the literature of religious ecstatic states presents a very wide range of phenomena. Even if one prefer to separate mysticism from the religious ecstasies and to make it a group apart, it will still be necessary to admit within religious mysticism many degrees or types. The healthy well poised steady-going Quaker who experiences the inspiration of the inner light has little in common with the epileptic-like states of St. Catherine of Genoa, which she herself so much regretted. What they have in common is the mystical state, mild or extreme, complicated or uncomplicated as the case may be. The mystical experience may sometimes be involved with abnormalities of the neuropsychic organization, but the one is not necessarily related to the other. The ecstatic states so admirably described from personal experience by Dostoieffsky were certainly brought on by his epilepsy, but ecstatic states are not always allied to epilepsy.

Quietism.—Much of the literature on mysticism is devoted to a very puzzling discussion over the differences between that which is orthodox and approved by the church and that which is unorthodox and to be avoided. Unorthodox mysticism claiming to be Christian is usually referred to as Quietism. This does not mean that all Quietists have had exactly the same practices and beliefs, nor that Quietism is always to be identified with the activities and the writings of a few great names whose teachings on mysticism have been condemned. Quietism began as a revolutionary movement in the Roman Catholic church of the seventeenth century. While the controversy over Quietism is largely

theological, the student of psychology cannot but be attracted by the apparent existence of something very different in the behavior, or the reported experiences, of some mystics which gave rise to the controversy. Unless there were some such differentiating features, it is difficult to imagine how the controversy arose. For the discovery of these characteristics it is necessary to summarize as well as possible some of the outstanding beliefs concerning the two kinds of mysticism.

The orthodox or approved form of Christian mysticism is not treated as an end in itself, but as a means to an end. The object is a better life, not a life withdrawn from the world of human affairs, except as periods of withdrawal may be temporarily necessary as part of the exercise, but a life of service to mankind according to the will of God. St. Theresa herself emphasized the importance of active participation in humanitarian endeavors and her own busy life amply supports her belief in this as the goal of the mystic. The extensive managerial and philanthropic work of St. Catherine of Genoa further exemplifies the contention. True mysticism is also presented as requiring a definite coöperating act of God, an act of grace as it is termed, which supplements the efforts of the person following the mystic way. This makes it necessary that the life of the mystic shall be acceptable to God in order that the individual may be worthy of such special consideration. The achievement of this special worthiness is presented by the mystics as a long and very arduous struggle. It is often referred to, in the language of St. John of the Cross, as the "dark night of the soul."

The typical Quietist is presented as one who is not

seeking special preparation or inspiration for an active life, and as one who believes himself superior to the law and the established teachings of the church. That the individual Quietist may achieve high states of abstraction is not denied, but they are said not to receive the special act of grace and that they do not seek it. They are said to believe that passivity, relaxation and the progressive abandonment of the consciousness of self is the way to a mystic union with the Absolute, and that the goal of Quietistic mysticism is this state of absorption or mergence.

To the psychologist these descriptions reveal the recognition of what he is accustomed to call a difference of attitude. Psychological studies of recent years have revealed the very great significance of the mental attitude or set. Experiments on the simple reaction time reveal that the set may continue to function, and to produce quite correct responses, without being conscious. A nurse may go to sleep with a set to awake if her patient calls ever so faintly. During her sleep she will appear in every way as in normal sleep, yet she will respond instantly when that particular set or preparation is stimulated. Hypnosis has often been mistakenly described as a kind of sleep because superficial descriptions make it appear sleeplike. But more careful examination reveals hypnosis to be a state of peculiarly high attention. The operator brings his subject into this high state of attention or absorption by a proper utilization of the effect of an attitude. It has been further demonstrated that an attitude may determine not only the nature of the state achieved but also the after effects, even the subject's interpretation of the state

in which he has been. In table-tipping séances the subjects are impressed with the idea that they shall not push the table at any time, the not-push attitude is established. After the séance is concluded they will therefore insist most emphatically that they did not push and they are perfectly sincere about it, although it can be easily demonstrated that it was their own hands which moved the table. They went into the state with the not-push attitude; so they came out of it; and so they interpret the phenomena in some supernatural manner.

Escape Motive.—Orthodox mysticism begins with an attitude of submission and expectancy, hopefulness for an act of grace, willingness to struggle long and hard in the effort to make the life acceptable to God, with the notion of a life of active devotion as a follower of Jesus as the ultimate goal. Quietism is presented as beginning with an attitude of expectancy for a state of absorption and as involving notions of escape from a disagreeable present. These notions of escape ¹¹ are important if true, and there seems to be no adequate reason for denying them. With such a difference of attitude all the differences which have been presented between the descriptions of the orthodox and unorthodox varieties of mysticism could be explained, and especially the after effects. If the goal is adjustment to life and the world for one person, and escape from the world for another, the after effects must inevitably be different. Doubtless herein lies the essentially psychological difference between approved mysticism and the condemned Quietistic mysticism.

¹¹ See J. B. Pratt's *The Religious Consciousness*, p. 470; and John Howley's *Psychology and the Mystical Experience*, Part II, Chaps. 1, 2.

Yet more could be made of the escape motive in Quietism if one were inclined to accept psychoanalytic interpretations. Orthodox Christianity has always laid much stress upon self control. The achievement of self control means self discipline, the subjugation of the primitive tendencies and impulses of an individual to the inhibitions of a self. The psychoanalysts think of this in terms of the development of the ego and the super-ego which exercise repressive powers upon unconscious motivations. Quietism would then be interpreted as an escape from all this effort at self discipline because it is disagreeable. Such a relinquishment of self, an obliteration or dissipation of the ego and its influences, would be a regression to childish ways of action. While such regressions may be pleasant for the time being, they are in the reverse direction from that which leads to adequate adjustment to reality.

Mysticism and Theory of Introversion.—It is also useful to relate these forms of behavior to the concepts of extraversion and introversion which have come in recent years to such prominence in psychological literature. Normally the extravert is one who finds his satisfactions predominantly in the sensory and perceptive experiences of life. The introverted individual finds his satisfactions in his thoughts and higher or derived feelings, in his own inner life. Between these extremes there is the large middle group of human beings who are neither predominantly extravertive nor introvertive. They enjoy a balance between extravertive and introvertive interests and pleasures. Sometimes there are extremes of either extraversion or introversion which are abnormal. When they are abnormal

the individual does not swing out of the extreme readily, nor of his own will. He seems to be stuck in the extraverted or in the introverted state.

In the life of the well adjusted individual the periods of introversion provide the bases for a better understanding and adjustment to the realities of life. It is in these times of introversion that the ordinary man "thinks things over" and comes to a better understanding of himself, his associates, his problems of life, and plans a new mode of attack. If they include a bit of philosophizing, the reading of some good book, listening to some lecture, contacts with works of art, presence in church, and the consideration of a sermon, they may contribute to a better orientation in life. When he swings out of his introversion into the necessary extraversion for the business of living, he comes into his extraversion with a better poise and better self organization, with a better adjustment to his world. And for the person who leads a life predominantly introvertive, periods of extraversion provide likewise the basis for a better balance and a better poise. It is a common saying that the minister, and the college professor especially, must keep in contact with the world of everyday affairs in order to maintain a healthy balance, not to become queer and crankish.

Mystical states are obviously periods of introversion, the effect of which should therefor be a better self organization and a better social adjustment. This is true where the motivation for the period of introversion is that of seeking better adjustment and not that of escape. The Quaker does not seek to escape but seeks the aid of his God for better living. From his periods of

introversion, occupied with healthful meditation upon his relationship to God and his own conduct, he comes back to the affairs of everyday life with a poise which has made him famous. Quaker efficiency, poise and activity in welfare work are ample proof of the stabilizing effect of recurrent periods of religious introversion. Where the motive for the introversion is that of escape, the individual will not welcome the cessation of the introversion nor is the return likely to be accompanied by any lasting improvement in his adjustment to life.

It is doubtful if the ecstasies of the revival campaign and the faith healing meeting can be properly thought of as introvertive. There is not the long exercise of self training and of self discipline nor is the ecstasy preceded by a withdrawal into meditation. The condition is brought about by close attention to an external situation and in the process suggestion is a very influential factor. Here too there seems to be some danger of the ecstatic state itself being valued above the influence it may have upon the after life.

Summary.—One should now look back and apply the proposed interpretations to the different forms of religious ecstatic states. The excesses of revivalistic conversion behavior would be brought about by the overexcitation of the emotions of conversion and at the same time such a retraction of the field of consciousness as to aid in the reduction of inhibition. It would be more readily produced in those whose nervous organizations were for one reason or another weak. The expectant attitude is undoubtedly an influential factor.

What has just been said of conversion would apply with equal force to the experience termed “getting the

power." These are simple ecstatic phenomena. In cases of prophecy or inspiration the habits of the individual are probably more introverted than the average of the population. The emotional factors are also prominent and the circumstances are such as to reduce inhibition and excite the emotions, but the mode of expression remains more highly organized than in the wild convulsive expression of the conversion phenomenon.

Mystical states vary enormously. Each instance must be explained by itself, but most of them may be explained in terms of the motive, the attitude established, retraction of the field of consciousness, the free development of certain emotions, and the effect of introspective periods upon extravertive adjustments. The more extreme instances, and perhaps for that reason the more famous, are in all probability complicated by a basically defective nervous condition. The periods of "dryness" mentioned by the more famous mystics, periods in which they seemed unable to achieve the mystical experience, are not so easy to explain. Psychologists speculate but not very illuminatingly. Perhaps the stabilizing effect of a few experiences hindered the achievement of a repetition. And then there is the unexploited possibility that the interpretations which they themselves developed acted as a negative suggestion. Perhaps those states are related to the little known temperamental features which underlie the physiology of the emotions.

CHAPTER XI

RELIGIOUS EXERCISES: THEIR MOTIVATION; PRAYER

A single religious experience is never adequate. However highly such may be valued by theology the single religious experience is psychologically insufficient. It can establish the possibility of subsequent recall of an event which at the time was very satisfying, but it cannot form a habit, it cannot establish a sentiment, nor can it insure the individual against further conflicts between his personal ambitions and the circumstances of his physical or social environment.

The motivation of religion as a whole is to be found, it will be recalled (second chapter) in the fundamental drives of life. In the effort to achieve the goal of these drives, man is destined to make many mistakes. The limitations of human knowledge and intelligence make it inevitable that man should blunder along through life. Conflicts between his desires and the apparent facts of the physical environment arise recurrently. And so do conflicts between himself and his social order. A full religious experience results in a new adjustment, a new orientation, the achievement of an at-peace-with-the-world state of mind.

Need for Repetitions of Religious Experience.—But such a state can be of no more than temporary duration. No adjustment can be permanent because

both the individual and the environment are constantly changing. New situations, new strains and new conflicts continually arise. New enemies appear; new industrial problems come up; the changes of age and the ever recurrent problems of marriage and domestic life take on ever new aspects. Death with its strains and its partings must be faced. There is no peace. The more complex the environment and the more complex the individual the more frequent the conflict between individual and environment. The higher the intelligence and the greater the knowledge the more complex does the world appear. Hence the ever recurrent necessity for new religious experience—the dropping of the conflict and the acceptance of a better working basis for the world as it then appears.

Desire Motive.—This brings clearly to the fore one outstanding motive for religious exercises, to produce again that relief, that consolation and that re-orientation which comes through religious experience. The religious exercise at best is designed to satisfy this want. Psychologically classified this motive is of the variety called desire. There is the memory of a former pleasurable experience and its recall stimulates the seeking for its repetition. It is a common saying that men seek religion in times of tension and fall into indifference in times of peace and plenty. The times of tension quite naturally stir the desire for relief. In times of peace and plenty adjustment for the majority is easy, except of course for the tragedies of life which are ever present whatever the state of the times. Perhaps the long persisting loyalty of the Jew to his religion has its basis in this motive. With the improvement of their social

status, especially in this country, there are many complaints of wandering from the faith of their fathers.

A special form of this desire motive is the wish to live so constantly in the presence of God as to reduce the conflicts of life to a minimum, if not entirely to eliminate them. The effort to practice the presence of God has given rise to many religious exercises. Sometimes these are performed not only every day but many times a day. By the frequency of prayer or meditation it is hoped to keep the consciousness of God and of some special interpretation of life so constantly in mind that conflicts and strains are of little moment. To one who lives consciously in the presence of God, and with the conviction that God is determining the affairs of his life, the problems of age and sickness and death and the struggle for existence would bring little distress. Many of the ordinary troubles of life would not arise at all.

Duty Motive.—The second motive for the development of religious exercises is the concept of duty. Forms and ceremonies have come into being somehow and their origin has been lost in antiquity. Theologies develop on the basis of both natural and revealed knowledge. The ceremonies are interpreted in terms of the theologies and then the ceremonies become obligations. It becomes the duty of the individual believer to continue what has always been done or what some great religious leader of the past did and said should be done.

It cannot well be denied that this motive to some extent, involves a fear factor. The individual fears that something serious may happen if the religious exercise is not perpetuated. Instances are readily available of

children in Christian homes who fear the consequences of an omission in the daily recitation of their prayers. Descriptions of ancestor worship in China clearly indicate that a part of the motivation lies in the fear that, unless certain ceremonies are carried out, the ancestor may cause harm to the living members of the family. In the more highly developed religions there is probably also some influence of the consciousness that God is so great and so good that he is entitled to the honor of frequent ceremonies of adoration.¹

Evangelical Motive.—In the evangelical branches of the Christian religion, many churches reveal in their customs evidence of a motive other than those which lead to worship. This is the evangelical motive. It can be attributed to the normal expression of the tenderness with which the full religious experience is concluded. The individual desires to bring into the lives of others the same happiness that he himself has enjoyed. But there is also a duty factor in the evangelical motive. Religious founders, notably the founder of Christianity, are quoted as commanding their followers to preach the gospel to others, to evangelize the world. Many Christian sects consider it the bounden duty of every Christian to make other Christians. This motive has produced an elaborate development of religious practices or exercises designed primarily for those who have never had a religious experience, or who have never had the same kind of religious experience. These are designed to produce conversions.

The evangelical motive is doubtless, in many in-

¹ See article by J. Vernon Bartlett in *Ency. Religion and Ethics* under "Worship."

dividuals, reinforced also by what McDougall calls active sympathy. This is the common human impulse to stir in others the same feeling or emotion that we ourselves experience. The person who sees a beautiful sunset, or who discovers a rainbow in the sky, does not impulsively enjoy it all to himself, but immediately calls others to come and see. The effect is apparently twofold. Not only does the individual succeed in arousing the same emotions in those whom he calls to come and see, but his own emotional experience seems also to be intensified by hearing and seeing the manifestations of those emotions in his comrades. The evangelistic motive may be in part thus a selfish one. By stirring the same experience in others, the individual has his own religious feelings heightened in intensity. Perhaps a jaded enthusiast may even by such means re-arouse his own religious emotions.

In the interpretation of any given religious exercise, such as, for example, the conduct of a Christian service of worship, it will soon be discovered that there are usually traces of all three of these motives—the desire for repetition, the duty motive, and the evangelical motive. Whether these can be wisely mixed, especially whether the evangelical motive can be wisely mixed with the other two, is an open question. It is of importance first, however, to recognize that there are such mixtures in current practice. When religious leaders begin to apply systematic studies to their own procedures, it may be possible to determine if such a mixture is successful. In some orders of worship it is possible to observe music and prayers designed apparently to stir anew in the worshiper that course of ideational

and emotional changes here termed the religious experience. And if one looks about at the people who participate one soon suspects that there are many present who have come for the comfort and consolation which it brings. But some of the hymns sung and some of the words of the preacher seem to imply that church attendance is a duty incumbent upon all Christians. And, as one observes the congregation coming and going, one is inclined to suspect that some are there from a sense of duty. The words of the preacher and often the words of some of the hymns may, however, be decidedly evangelical in character, addressed quite evidently to non-Christians, or to those of a very different sect of Christianity. Here is the admixture of the evangelical motive.

Worship as an Exercise.—Definitions of worship vary with the point of view and are usually couched in theological language. Alexander ² has in an able article defined worship as fundamentally the “active side of religion.” And then he has sought to carry the definition back into what in the psychology of the individual prompts the act of worship. But it is easy to find Christian orders of worship in which the individual worshiper is expected to do so little, besides furnishing his own personal presence, that the term active is scarcely applicable. Indeed, as will be seen later, it is desirable to distinguish between active and passive forms of worship. Hickman ³ has come nearer

² Alexander, H. B., article entitled “Worship” in *Ency. of Religion and Ethics*.

³ Hickman, F. S., *Introduction to Psychology of Religion*, p. 346. For a general treatise on worship see also Strickland, F. L., *Psychology of Religious Experience*, Chaps. 9 and 10.

to a psychological definition in saying that worship is "any exercise through which man feels that he comes into special relation with his divinity." While Hickman seems by implication to have had in mind the fact that a religious exercise is designed for those who have already enjoyed a religious experience, who have been converted, or who have experienced the consciousness of the reality of if not the actual presence of God, it is not definitely so stated. Such a distinction is necessary in order that worship may not be confused with evangelism, which is quite another form of religious exercise. Therefore it would seem better to define worship as any form of religious exercise designed to re-arouse the religious experience or the consciousness of intimate personal relationship to God.

For purposes of presentation it is well to distinguish between worships that are public and those that are private. The public form of worship would include all those wherein the religious exercise is dependent upon the coöperating participation of a group. Examples of such may be found among the many forms of worship seen in temples, synagogues, cathedrals, churches, chapels, and meetinghouses. In all of these one will observe indications of the desire for renewed experience motive and also the duty motive. In some a single motive only may be found. And in some there may be a mixture of worship and the evangelical form of religious exercise.

Private forms of worship are those which are practiced by an individual without regard for others. Usually they are practiced alone. This ordinarily means in physical isolation, alone in one's room for example;

but they may be practiced in a church, or before a way-side shrine, where others may see and even hear. They are termed private because they are practiced with indifference to any participation by others. Personal religious devotions, many of the obligations of the practical Catholic, participation in such movements as the Quiet Hour and the Morning Watch are examples of private forms of worship.

It is necessary to add, as is usually the consequence of any such arbitrary classification, that there are forms of worship which partake to some extent of each category. Family prayers for example seem more private than public, and yet they do involve at least a small group. The Roman Catholic exercise known as Retreat is another difficult to classify. Sometimes Retreat is so conducted that certain items of the exercise are carried out in a group, but there are also many instances of individuals going through the retreat exercise entirely as a form of private worship.

When examined psychologically, any religious exercise will be revealed as a program of activities for the arousal of certain thoughts and feelings, and for the inhibition of all that might disturb. Such a program may be planned and operated purely for the effect upon others. This is true of the evangelical religious exercise. The entire program for an evangelistic meeting may be laid out on wholly technological considerations. Just what is necessary to draw the crowd may be determined upon and then all the necessary items to hold attention, to bring the thoughts upon sin and God and the future, to suggest the new way of living, and to arouse sufficiently the emotions of those who respond. Such has

been done by people whose religious sincerity is open to serious question. The use of a religious exercise ordinarily implies, however, some religious effect upon the individual who utilizes the exercises. A prayer might for example be very effectively worded and be recited perfectly by a wholly unreligious person who cared nothing for the prayer itself, and yet many who listened might be stirred by those words to a true feeling of communion with God. But the use of a prayer commonly implies the desire of the individual who prays to achieve that consciousness of communion whatever may be the effect upon others. Exercises in meditation upon religious subjects are obviously designed for the effect upon the one who meditates, and here especially are good examples of the inhibitory effect of the exercise as well as the stimulating influence. The meditative exercise is designed to eliminate all other thoughts from consciousness as well as to aid in arousing the full meanings of the religious thoughts considered.

Active versus Passive Participation.—When one turns attention from the religious exercise itself to the individual who is subjected to the effect of the exercise, one quickly observes that there are many degrees of difference in the amount of voluntary participation on the part of that individual. This degree of activity or passivity is important. The practice of private prayer necessitates active effort on the part of the one who prays. But in the presence of public prayer the worshiper is often wholly passive. The one who “leads in prayer” may give utterance to a very eloquent and moving prayer and because of its eloquence and moving qualities profoundly stir the religious feelings of those

who listen. Psychologically considered the words of that prayer are but stimuli to the minds of passively listening auditors. It is possible, on the other hand, for the persons of a congregation to participate in the prayer and not merely to listen. It is possible to follow the thought of the one who so "leads" and to participate actively in the wishes expressed.

Many religious exercises are so designed as to assume the active effortful participation of the worshiper. Of this type the Quaker meeting is an excellent example. The whole exercise centers upon the continued effort of the worshiper to shut out of his mind all worldly things, sensations and perceptions and thoughts of mundane affairs, and to concentrate upon the thought of God, thus to wait for any inspiration which may come. Curiously Robert Barclay characterized this as a passive form of worship, and theologically it may be so but psychologically it is most active. If one attended such a meeting in a purely passive manner, one's mind might wander over many fields of thought which would not have been approved by Robert Barclay. The heavy emphasis placed by the orthodox Jew and by the Roman Catholic upon the duty of regular participation in certain approved forms brings the active feature to the fore. Church attendance may obviously be either active or passive. One may go with a will to worship, to meditate upon the proper subjects at the proper time and to keep all other thoughts out; or one may go and sit calmly awaiting whatever effect may be stirred by the program there presented. In the latter case there may be an active competition between the styles of clothing worn by the members of the choir and the

music which they render, and which was so carefully selected for its desired effect by those who planned that order of worship. Some religious organizations apparently place little emphasis today upon active participation. They seem to trust entirely to the appealing power of the items in their order of worship. Others stress stoutly the obligation to active participation, and with these success must depend upon maintaining an active consciousness of duty.

With this as a general introduction to the psychology of religious exercises, it is wise to examine some of the exercises specifically and in greater detail. Their number is legion; but a few examples will suffice, and the effort here will be to consider some of those most readily observable in this country.

Prayer.—This form of religious exercise is ordinarily defined in terms almost identical with those used for the definition of worship. It is described as an exercise by which the individual seeks to come into communion with the divine. Some have recognized this and assert that prayer is the essence of worship, as it undoubtedly is. This would make the psychological definition of prayer identical with that given above for worship. And, in so far as the longer and more complete prayers are concerned, that is an acceptable definition. It must early be observed, however, that all so-called prayers are not complete; and that they are used, as in the repetition of the rosary, as supplementary or incidental to some larger program. Then, too, there are prayers which cannot be classed as religious exercises at all. The distracted appeal to a higher power of a human being in dire distress is more like the cry for help of a

child that has fallen than it is of the nature of an exercise.

Prayer as it appears today seems to have grown out of older and more primitive forms of prayer or appeal.⁴ Religion proper is now presented as having evolved from the dim consciousness of some peculiar power or force, with which many objects were endowed. Efforts to influence or control this force resulted in magic. Taboo, it may be added, was but the negative side of this. Things which were taboo were things to be shunned because of the dangers involved in coming into too close contact with this vaguely understood power. Magical methods might be used, it was found, to direct this power in such a manner as to influence individuals at a distance for their weal or for their woe. This type of influencing at a distance by magical means is termed spell. With the development of religion out of magic, prayer evolved out of spell. So, the more primitive forms of prayer were apparently prayers of petition. And it seems that today children and the more naïve adults make of prayer but a sort of persistent and repeated pleading for this and that desire. Wundt further argues that out of the prayer of petition there evolved the prayers of thanksgiving, and that penitential prayers were a still later development. But whatever may have been its origin the use of prayer as a religious exercise is itself very ancient, and it is through that antiquity of usage that the psychologist will find explanation.

⁴ For presentations of this see—Wundt, W., *Elements of Folk Psychology*, p. 426 et. seq.; Marett, R. R., *The Threshold of Religion*, Chap. 2; *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, article on "Prayer"; Frazer, J. G., *The Golden Bough*, Indexed references.

The psychologically trained reader will not fail to observe at the outset that prayer is initiated in part by the assumption of some special physical attitude. It may be an inclination or bowing of the head, it may be an especially erect position with head uncovered, it may be kneeling, or it may be even a full prostration. Usually the eyes are closed, and, as a rule, some quiet place is sought, or there is effort to eliminate distractions. These postures and circumstances imply respect as if in the presence of the greatly superior. They are also postures associated with humility and inferiority. It will be recalled, too, that the physical position associated with a feeling or emotion aids greatly in the arousal of that emotion.

The Christian prayer usually opens with an attitude of expectancy and with thoughts of the greatness, the majesty, the omnipotence, the omniscience, the omnipresence, the glory, the worthiness, and the sublime justness of God. All these likewise emphasize the gap between God and man and make the individual who prays actively conscious of his own inferiority. But no one can entertain such thoughts seriously without experiencing a touch of wonder. Whatever is visibly great and grand and glorious in the world of sense stirs both inferiority feelings and those of curiosity or wonder as well. Much more so when these thoughts are expanded to approximate the infinite. The language of the prayer then passes to the sinfulness of the one who prays, a sort of general confession. If this is fully dwelt upon with emphasis upon the justness of God and that the individual is worthy of punishment, the normal emotional accompaniment of such thoughts would be

fear. But the prayer passes on to thoughts of the forgiving nature of God, the sacrifice which Jesus has made for all mankind, the loving-kindness of God, and the love of God for the sinner repentant. The giving up of personal desires and the substitution therefor of the will of the divine, the change of attitude or the resolution of any conflict which has developed in the life of the one who prays, appears in the recurrent emphasis upon the thought that the will of God, and not that of the supplicant, shall prevail. Christian prayers also usually include petitions for the health and happiness of others, sometimes specified by title or by name, and herein is to be observed again that tenderness which has before appeared in descriptions of the religious experience.

Particular prayers not infrequently stress one or more of these features to the apparent exclusion or omission of others. Some prayers are but brief expressions of some one item, as a prayer of praise, or a prayer of confession, or a prayer of petition for self or for others. Sometimes a series of such prayers are used in succession. Religions and sects vary in the degree of stress placed upon these different features in their prayers, and some may have little if any of the tenderness feature in them. But if there is the concept of forgiveness for sin involved, with a belief that such forgiveness takes place, then the tenderness feature must appear, at least toward the forgiving God.

Effects of Prayer.—Strong, in a much quoted study,⁵ stresses the enlargement, or, more specifically, the increased socialization of the self as the product of the interaction of the individual endowment with his en-

⁵ Strong, A. L., *Psychology of Prayer*, p. 75.

vironment. Prayer effects such an enlargement of this self as to make it better able to bear the sorrows of living and to make it more responsive to the "beauty of the universe." Although a little more vaguely stated, this is in substance consonant with the notion presented above that the effect of prayer, as a religious exercise, is the reminding of the individual who prays that he is accepting the ways of God and is adjusting himself to them. Stolz ⁶ has stressed the autosuggestive effect of prayer, that the constant reiteration must have its reflexive or unconscious effect upon the individual who prays. This might be likened to the alleged effect of the "day by day" formula of Coué, but in this instance there is more likelihood of some effect in the way of reinforcing the belief attitude. A reading of the prayers as used by the orthodox Jew ⁷ leads one to suspect that by much reiteration of phrases concerning the greatness of his God, the Jew, through the long periods of oppression, managed to sustain his own confidence in life and in the future. Fosdick,⁸ in a devotional manual of much insight, has wisely stressed the cumulative effect of prayer. The single, or even the occasional, use of prayer or any other religious exercise cannot, according to the laws of learning and of habit formation, have nearly the effect that a regular use may have. And, finally, the effect of prayer as an aid not only to endure the stresses of life but also as an aid in the ethical struggles of life, in the development of character, bring-

⁶ Stolz, K. R., *The Psychology of Prayer*. New York, Abingdon, 1923.

⁷ See the *Daily Prayer Book of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Empire*. Trans. by Rev. S. Singer. New York, Hebrew Pub. Co.

⁸ Fosdick, H. E., *The Meaning of Prayer*. New York, Association Press, 1919.

ing to the individual a new courage and a renewed consciousness of power, is not to be minimized.

That there may be other effects of prayer than those upon the individual who prays is altogether likely. The possibility that prayer may stir the God of the one who prays to some special activity in his behalf must, as has been indicated before, be set aside as one of those subjects which is beyond the field of psychology; but the sight of people praying may have a direct emotional effect upon those who but stand by and observe. Likewise, if an individual knows that a large number of people are praying for him, for his welfare, for his success, for his continued happiness, for continuance in ways of rectitude, that knowledge may readily stir such feelings as will aid in achieving the end desired. The effect of thinking about a mother's prayers is too well known to require extended emphasis here.

Prayer Forms.—Some discussions of prayer make much of type differences. A distinction has been stressed between spontaneous and formal prayers; but such a distinction, so long as the motive remains that of desire for religious experience (communion with God), is more literary than it is psychological. To be sure, the literary difference is often very great. Any one who reads the beautiful formal prayers of the Bible or the better known prayer manuals, and compares them with the crude utterances so often heard from many pulpits, cannot fail to recognize a difference which is both notable and pitiable. But the so-called spontaneous prayer is not to be thought of as an entirely free flowing utterance. An utterly free course of

thought and expression is rare if not impossible in the adult. Even daydreams are now known to be motivated and limited in their range of development. The course of thought and expression is governed by the brain organization which use has established. The individual who attempts a spontaneous prayer is certain to be influenced by the many impressions already received. He is inevitably influenced by the prayers he has heard and by the habits of thought and speech he has acquired. The beliefs of certain individuals may, however, be such as to prevent them from obtaining as satisfactory an experience through the use of formal prayers as they do through the use of their own habitual phrasings. There is a possible contention that in the formal prayer the thought follows the words of the book and that in the spontaneous prayer the thought precedes the words. But this presents a doubtful psychology. Most people think so largely in terms of verbal imagery that the contention of thought preceding the language in spontaneous prayer would be of little significance; while in the use of the formal prayer the worshiper quickly becomes so familiar with the form that it is rarely a reading or an audition without foreknowledge.

In collections of formal prayers it will be discovered that individual prayers differ in the number of phases of the religious experience expressed or included. Some express only thoughts and feelings concerning the greatness of God and the inferiority of mankind, others are primarily confessions of sin and pleas for forgiveness, others emphasize the relinquishment of the individual desire and the acceptance of the divine will,

while still others are expressions of tenderness and good will and desires for the welfare of others. Often two or more of these aspects are combined.

By far the greatest difference in prayer forms is to be found in the motive involved. It will be recalled that religious exercises, especially the worshipful group, were motivated either by desire for religious experience or by duty. A prayer may be uttered for the purpose of readjustment "getting right with God," and it may later be repeated as a mere matter of duty. At the one extreme is the fervent prayer of the person in distress or doubt or grief, and at the other is the individual who dutifully attends to his prayer wheel to make certain that its adjustment is constantly such that the stream of water shall keep it perpetually turning. Between these extremes there are many different degrees and combinations of desire and duty. It is reliably reported that prayers continue to be used by some people who no longer understand the language in which they are phrased. Their use is continued because they are hallowed by age, and the consciousness of duty still lingers.

Rosary.—A special problem appears in the use of the rosary as an aid to prayer and the repetition of prayers. The superficial observer might think that rosary praying was well on the road to the prayer wheel method of discharging a religious duty, and it is quite possible that individuals may so far violate the purpose of the rosary as to make their use of it little better than that of a prayer wheel. Ideally, however, the rosary is a counting device for the control of time intervals and the prayers uttered are used as aids to attention and the elimination of distractions. During the utterance

of these prayers the individual is supposed to meditate upon a prescribed series of religious topics. Each section of the rosary marks the time for the meditation upon each topic. There is of course no need for a clear vocalization of each prayer, as the fingers come to it on the rosary, because the attention is not on the prayer but upon the topic of meditation.⁹ Thus the items of the rosary become but a part of a more elaborate prayerful religious exercise.

⁹ For these topics of meditation see pamphlet issued by the Catholic Truth Society entitled *The Rosary Said Before the Blessed Sacrament*, also the *Catholic Encyclopædia*.

CHAPTER XII

RELIGIOUS EXERCISES: THE ORDER OF WORSHIP, HYMNS, ASCETICISM

If the analysis presented in the preceding chapter is correct, then the selection of items for the service of the ordinary non-ritualistic church and the order in which they are arranged should be such as to stir in the worshipers those thoughts and feelings which have been presented as characteristic of the religious experience. Undoubtedly many of these orders of worship do achieve that end. If they fail to do so, then they are by so much defective from the psychological point of view. Defects in an order of worship may, however, be largely offset or compensated by the active efforts of the worshiper, especially if combined with a strong expectant attitude.

Orders of Worship Compared.—The following order of worship closely approximates that which is psychologically ideal:

MORNING WORSHIP

ORGAN PRELUDE

Andante *Hesse Penfield*

INVOCATION

HYMN OF PRAISE

“All hail the power of Jesus Name”

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

HYMN OF CONSECRATION

"O Jesus, I have promised"

SCRIPTURE

John 21:1-17

ANTHEM

"Lord for thy tender mercies sake".....*Farrant*

AFFIRMATION

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

SILENT PRAYER

LORD'S PRAYER

ANNOUNCEMENTS

OFFERTORY PRAYER

OFFERTORY SOLO

"To the Lord Our God".....*Gaul*

HYMN

"Jesus shall reign"

SERMON

"Fishermen all"

PRAYER

CHORAL RESPONSE

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

"Marcia Villanesca".....*Fumagalli*

(From the First Presbyterian Church of Portland, Oregon. Arranged by Rev. Harold Leonard Bowman, D.D.)

This order of worship was conducted in a large church building of Gothic design. The building itself stirs a touch of awe in the worshiper, unless hardened by familiarity. The entering impression was well supplemented by the prelude, the invocation, and the hymn

of praise, and all combined stimulated thoughts of the presence of God and that complex emotion of awe which is analyzable into inferiority, wonder and some infusion of fear. Then the confession followed. It is psychologically the first step toward the new adjustment phase of the religious experience. This part was completed by the assurance of pardon and the hymn of consecration. The next items led up to the prayer of intercession supplemented by the silent prayer (necessitating active participation on the part of the worshiper) and the Lord's prayer, the items of which reviewed what had preceded. The consciousness of forgiveness and of new adjustment normally involves the arousal of tenderness not only toward God but also toward mankind, a most significant part of that world to which the new adjustment has been made. This new kindness as well as the new adjustment finds expression and emphasis in all of the remaining items of the order. It will be observed also that the desire motive is the only one assumed, and the whole service was conducted without a touch of assumption that the congregation were there from a consciousness of duty. While in places active participation on the part of the worshiper was assumed, it is evident that most of this order, and this was also true of the manner of its conduction, assumed the passive responsiveness of a merely willing worshiper. The evangelistic motive does not appear, the sermon title might imply it but the sermon content did not. Just below the printed order of worship there was in small type, the statement that "at the close of the service the session will meet . . . to receive any who wish to unite with the church." Thus was pro-

vided a proper opportunity for those so prompted to give expression to their impulse quietly and without display.

It should be instructive to examine also, from this psychological point of view, the order of items in the Book of Common Prayer, because it presents the orders of worship used in most Episcopal churches. The following abstract will suggest the course of thought and feeling expected by the arrangement for morning worship:—

PROCESSIONAL

Minister says,

“The Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him” (or some similar quotation). This is followed by at least two other sentences of Scripture one of which is to remind the worshiper of the church season and the other to stir a penitential attitude.

Minister says,

“Dearly beloved brethren, the Scripture moveth us . . . to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness; and that we should not dissemble nor cloak them before the face of Almighty God our heavenly Father; but confess them with an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart”; and so on.

GENERAL CONFESSION to be said by the whole congregation, after the minister, all kneeling.

THE DECLARATION OF ABSOLUTION, or Remission of Sins.

To be made by the priest alone, standing; the people still kneeling.

LORD'S PRAYER

Said by all in unison.

MINISTER. “O Lord, open thou our lips.”

ANSWER. “And our mouth shall show forth thy praise.”

MINISTER. "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost."

ANSWER. "As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."

MINISTER. "Praise ye the Lord."

ANSWER. "The Lord's Name be praised."

ANTHEM

Venite, exultemus Domino.

PSALMS, portion of,

ending with the Gloria Patri.

FIRST LESSON (Old Testament)

TE DEUM LAUDAMUS

SECOND LESSON (New Testament)

BENEDICTUS

APOSTLES CREED

PRAYERS

A series of prayers, selected in part according to a religious calendar, which include prayers for the welfare of others.

THE GRACE

This concludes the morning prayer service. It may be followed by a hymn, a sermon and the recessional. Frequently it is followed by the service of Holy Communion which amplifies and intensifies the mental experiences aroused by the foregoing.

This order of worship, it will be observed, is designed to arouse essentially the same course of thought and feeling as that of the Presbyterian church presented above. The physical situation of presence in the church, confronted by the altar and the symbols of Christianity, is supplemented by the processional hymn and the solemn announcement of God's presence. All are designed to bring the consciousness of the presence of God and the emotion of wonder. If thoughts of per-

sonal unworthiness and feelings of inferiority have not already been aroused by association, they are stimulated by the call to confess and the emphasis upon sin and unworthiness in the phrases of the confession. Then comes the solemn expression of absolution which is followed by a number of items expressive of joy and thanksgiving and praise. The order of worship proceeds to further impress the new adjustment by scripture readings and then by the recitation of the creed, after which come thoughts of the welfare of others and prayers for their realization. It is to be further observed that while there is in this order much that would be effective were the state of mind of the worshiper quite passive, still the obvious intent is that there shall be a very active participation by the worshiper. The procedure must be followed intently, for now he must stand and now he must kneel, now he must respond and now he must remain silent. The stranger who does not know how to participate is much more likely to find himself confused by this order of service than by the one just presented above where there is less of the active feature.

A similar examination of the items in the ordinary of the Roman Catholic Mass ¹ would reveal much the same general course of thought and feeling, but it would also overlook some very significant factors in the worship experience of the practical Catholic. The belief in the doctrine of transubstantiation, that doctrine of the real presence which means that the body and blood of Christ are "truly, really and substantially" present in the Eucharist, must aid enormously in

¹ See preferably *The Roman Missal* as edited by Dom F. Cabrol.

bringing about a consciousness of being in the presence of God. Presumably the effect of this would be that of enhancing or intensifying every phase of the religious experience. It must also be observed that the practical Catholic worshiper going to Mass on a Sunday does so with a peculiar preparation. He has but recently been to confession, just the day before if he is to communicate, or perhaps even earlier that same Sunday morning, and that confession was a private personal experience with a confessor peculiarly authorized. Entirely apart from the theological significances of this practice, it must prepare the mind of the worshiper for attendance at Mass and for communion in such a fashion as to facilitate response to every step in the ordinary of the Mass. One might at first think that the placing of the confession experience the day before, with all of its attendant emotions, might make the individual less likely to have intense experiences of wonder and inferiority and fear when he went to church on Sunday morning; and this might be true but for the belief that the worshiper is actually, while at Mass, in the presence of a stupendous miracle resulting in the presence of the body and blood of Christ.

Descriptions by those who have been often through the experience, beginning with confession and culminating in communion, indicate that it includes all of those psychological features here described as characteristic of the religious experience. There is the consciousness of wrong, the giving up of the old and the acceptance of the better way, the consciousness of God, the experience of wonder and inferiority and fear, the awareness of a new adjustment or a renewed orienta-

tion and lastly the comfort, the peace, the feeling of new strength, and the kindness toward others. They also reveal that it is far from being a merely passive experience. The personal confession obviously necessitates activity, and the topics provided for meditation from time to time in the course of the Mass prohibit a simple passivity.

Manuals for Jewish worship, especially that for the orthodox Jew, present religious exercises the psychological purpose of which is apparently that of keeping clearly in the consciousness of the individual worshiper that he is living always in the presence of his God. As religious exercises, they differ notably from those just presented. In the Jewish order there is no such clean cut progressive sequence of items. There is a frequently recurrent emphasis upon the greatness, the power and the majesty of God, phrased in the beautiful language of the Old Testament. Praise is throughout the dominant note. Prayers of petition appear, primarily for strength to abide by the law of God and that peace may reign in the homes and lives of the brethren. Special thankfulness is expressed for the law and for the Sabbath. These regular orders of worship for daily and Sabbath use assume active participation on the part of the worshiper. The sins of man are ceremonially emphasized and discarded at certain special seasons or festivals. While praise is apparently the fundamental purpose, the extent and nature of the daily exercises supplemented by the longer exercises for the Sabbath must have the effect of establishing and maintaining a persistent consciousness of life in a world dominated by God. Thus the reorientation feature of the Sabbath

exercise is less significant, although there is stress upon the peace and comfort bringing power of the Sabbath observance. The periodic and elaborate ceremonials for the elimination of sin bring less frequently to the fore that readjustment feature so important in religious experience. There is in these orders no lack of thoughts to stir wonder, inferiority, fear and tenderness.

Hymns.—In the religious exercises of Christianity the singing of hymns has a significantly large place. The number of them is now enormous. New ones are being put forward frequently and old ones that did not “take” are being discarded. New and revised collections are published from time to time. Many long ago became “old favorites” and are reproduced in nearly every collection. The activities of evangelistic campaign leaders have led to the production of many, especially of the evangelical type.

Hymns were presented in an earlier part of this book (see Chapter 6) as one of those expressions of religious emotion which are also used as appeals or stimuli to the arousal of similar emotion. Any good collection of hymns might then be used as data for psychological study, for the purpose of discovering through their examination the nature of the religious experience which had found expression in them. A very few such studies have been made and they must be examined. But before doing so it will be instructive to glance rapidly through any available collection of church hymns and note especially their classification. In one prominent group are the hymns of praise; ² hymns about sin

² These Wundt thought had evolved from prayers of thanksgiving. See his *Folk Psychology*, p. 429 et seq.

and confession constitute another, in the older hymnals there is more about hell and punishment; then there are hymns about salvation, the new way of life; hymns of joy and gladness are another large group; there are hymns of consecration, promising to continue in the way of the divine will; and there are hymns about trial and suffering; the evangelical motive appears in hymns of invitation to sinners; there are hymns of prayer for others and there are missionary hymns, both groups expressing tender interest in the welfare of others. Then there are hymns for special occasions, as for Christmas time and Easter. And there is a considerable number which seem to stress certain selected theological concepts.

It will be seen that these groupings very roughly follow the different phases or stages of the religious experience already presented. From any good collection it is then possible to select hymns which are appropriate to any stage of a complete religious exercise. Some years ago a thorough examination of the types of hymns appearing in a large hymnal was made by Coe³ for the purpose of discovering degrees of emphasis. He found an extraordinarily small percentage of hymns dealing with the active phases of religious life. Of the entire collection numbering one thousand one hundred and seventeen he found that about one and a half percent were concerned with the everyday activities of the mature Christian adult. This he regreted, and doubtless with propriety, but it also stoutly supports the belief that a large part of religious experience is concerned with the struggles in thought and feeling

³ Coe, G. A., *The Spiritual Life*, p. 219 et seq.

involved in the process of religious readjustment. It is that process which is going on in the course of a religious experience such as church worship for example; and while that leaves the individual with the impulse to do, to struggle, to live a life in the world according to religious ideals, those struggles take place in the streets and the offices and the factories not in the course of the church worship.

That hymns are expressions of the inner emotional and thought life of the individual has been recognized by students of personality and some beginnings made in the direction of their use as data for psychoanalytic study.⁴ Martin observes that the problem of the social adjustment of the individual is a phase of that conflict, which the psychoanalysts make so much of, between the growing child and the father. In the quaint language of the psychoanalysts it is a part of the "family romance."⁵ In fact Martin goes so far as to say that the center of religious interest is the resolution of this conflict between the child and the father. Young has made a more elaborate analysis of Christian Protestant hymns from this same general point of view.

In his investigation of two thousand nine hundred and twenty-two hymns Young found that thirty-three percent of them expressed thoughts and desires concerning a return to infancy. Leaning on the everlasting arms, Children of the heavenly king, Let me to thy bosom fly, Guide me O thou great Jehovah, He leadeth me, He holds my hand, Wipe sorrow's tears away, and

⁴ Martin, E. D., *The Mystery of Religion*, Chap. 4; Young, K., "The Psychology of Hymns," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 1925-6, 20, 391-406.

⁵ See White, W. A., *Mechanisms of Character Formation*, Chap. 7.

many another phrase of like purport are familiar to all who know the average hymnal. The thought of these analysts is that the individual in making his adjustment to the social situations of life does so inevitably in terms of his infancy and family background. The first great problems of that adjustment arise in the adolescent years when he is just beginning the process of becoming an independent person, and so it is not to be wondered at if the peace and comfort of parental care and the ways of the home are recalled with longing. The recollections of these periods of childhood protection and comfort and guidance are often recalled by adults as well, and are commonly looked back upon as the golden age of the individual. So it is not surprising that many references should be made to the parents and the home and its comforts in the efforts which have been made to describe the peace and joy and relief which have come through a full religious experience.

It is the thought of the psychoanalyst that every normal individual goes through a process of breaking away from father domination, and that this process involves a phase of disillusionment or disappointment with the father. He is discovered not to be so great and grand and all-powerful as he had appeared to be in childhood days. There are also aspects of the father, especially his efforts at disciplinary domination, which are now thought to be bad. Thus two phases of the father appear, the lost goodness and greatness and the evil with which there is conflict. The solution is found through religion by a substitution of Jesus-God for the ideal father, and of the devil, which is to be fought in all his ways, for the evil aspects of the father image.

Thus the religious adjustment is interpreted as the solution of the conflict in the life of the individual. If the religious experience is so motivated and is so effective, then the extensive use of the language of parental contacts and of fighting the evil one, fighting the battles of the faith, are expressions of this conflict and its solution. And such hymns, it will be recalled, may serve not only as aids in the solution of conflicts and in the formation of habits, but also in the keeping of habit patterns alive and active.

Asceticism.—In the efforts which have been made to establish the habit of living as though constantly in the presence of God, or, at least, of living according to what is assumed to be the will of God, men have found it necessary to choose between impulses, to select certain of the possible activities of life in preference to others. This has led to the development of many rigorous programs for the daily life, the following of any one of which may properly be considered a religious exercise.

The self discipline involved in this form of religious exercise has attracted much attention, and it has been often pointed out that such is far from being peculiar to those who seek the religious life. Athletes have always found it necessary to practice a certain regimen of self discipline. Rigid systems of training for the achievement of athletic superiority which necessitate the athlete's giving up many cherished habits and pleasures are a matter of common knowledge. Dietary prescriptions for those who would reduce are often Spartan in their severity. The achievement of professional success in life demands the acceptance of

some goal and the stern refusal to fritter away time on those activities which are likely to prevent or postpone its achievement. All such systems of self discipline for the achievement of developmental goals are looked upon by some authors as forms of asceticism. Their emphasis is upon the self disciplinary feature. For them religious asceticism, even including some of its more extreme manifestations, would be but the establishment and practice of whatever habits of life may be necessary to the achievement of some desired religious goal.

Others prefer to limit the use of the term asceticism to the designation of those more extreme mortifications of the body which have been practiced by some devotees. This conforms to what is apparently the popular significance of the term. Mention of asceticism ordinarily brings to mind stories of those who wear hair shirts or nail studded belts, who more than half starve themselves by prolonged periods of fasting, who lie on beds of nails, or who whip themselves until the blood runs. On second thought, however, most people will recall that these are but the practices of extremists and that there have also been large numbers of religious men and women who for the sake of their religion have denied themselves the pleasure and comforts of marriage and parenthood, who have denied themselves the satisfaction of social contacts, or who have voluntarily entered a life filled with the privations of poverty. Such are not limited to the Roman Catholic Church, nor to the religious orders within that church. Protestant missionaries and ministers at home, religious workers of many kinds and in many countries, have led and still lead lives necessitating much self denial. Even

if confined to religious lives asceticism includes many varieties of self discipline.

The student of psychology need not, however, worry himself much over the definition of asceticism. Here is for him a mass of human behavior the motivations and effects of which he seeks to understand. The self discipline of the athlete and the self denials of those seeking professional or social success are of significance to the student of religious behavior only as they illustrate the well known fact that the coördination of growth and habit formation for a special end necessitates selection among impulses according to a purpose. It goes back to the fundamental psychology of purpose and attention and choice; and, as every student knows, purpose is one of the fundamental factors governing selection or choice. The self denials of the missionary and the limitations voluntarily assumed by the deaconess are but instances of choice between impulses. They may at times be instances of choices between possible pleasures, but it is doubtful if the pleasures appear to them as of equal value. The devoted religious worker finds the lasting satisfactions of life in activities and achievements which do not appeal in like manner to other men. There are differences in evaluation between the man of the world and the man of God which must not be left out of consideration.

But ascetic practices, such as the self denial of instincts, of physical and social and even of intellectual and esthetic pleasures, are often supplementary to forms of religious exercise. They are in such instances used with a purpose which differentiates them from the mere choice of impulses incidental to the achievement

of a goal. The best examples are to be found in the ascetic practices of those who have sought the higher states of approved Christian mysticism. They believed that the highest state, that of mystical union with God, required a special act of grace and that this would not be forthcoming unless their lives were such as to commend them perfectly to God. If there was aught in their lives, which did not conform to their conception of what was most godly, the consciousness of this would act as a deterrent to the achievement of the desired state. In the language of psychoanalytic psychology there would develop an intrapsychic conflict which would in itself be sufficient to prevent the achievement of that peaceful joyousness of the highest mystical state, wholly apart from the problem of God's approval or disapproval and the achievement of an act of grace. Thus ascetic practices became necessary in order to make the life of the individual conform to their own ideal of what was expected of them.

According to this conception, differences in theological and philosophical beliefs might produce very great differences in what are considered essential features of ascetic practice. If a man believed, for example, that the degree of his future happiness depended upon the amount of physical suffering endured in this world, then for him no mortification of the body could be excessive. If a religiously minded person believed that the body is the eternal opposite of the soul and is the source of all sin, religious practice for that person would if consistent, include severe discipline of the body. Everything which might bring comfort to the body would appear dangerous if not evil and thus be

something to avoid. If, however, the individual believed that the body is a "temple for the soul" and that physical health is essential to the achievement of the goal of a religious life, then a necessary part of his asceticism would have to be the maintenance of that temple in a healthy condition. To the former, a cold bath in the morning would be a pampering of the body and thus something to be denied; to the latter, it would be a necessary item in his ascetic program no matter whether he enjoyed the cold bath or not.

But critics have charged that individual ascetics have lost sight of their religious goal and have made their ascetic practices a goal in themselves. Concerning this there is naturally much difference of opinion and little agreement upon just who is a fair example of such a perversion. Hence it is better not to mention names but to consider it merely as a psychological possibility. That such is possible anyone familiar with the contemporary studies of abnormal human behavior will recognize at a glance. There is a curious human trait which results in a certain pleasure derived from personal pain or discomfort. Some people really do "enjoy poor health." If this trait be instinctive, or if it be early acquired, matters little. It seems to be present in most human beings, but in most it is a relatively insignificant feature. The psychoanalysts have made much of it under the name of masochism. They hold that it is one phase of the sex instinct, and it must be admitted that excessive masochistic development is usually associated with sexuality. In such cases the pain producing stimuli are applied by another person, and of the other sex.

It is well within the bounds of possibility that a given individual might have, in early life, had a fairly well developed masochistic trait and that gradually this came to be controlled and eventually to disappear, as the ideals and inhibitions of the individual became established through the growing years. If later this individual became very religious, with very stern beliefs of what was expected of him, he might so severely treat his body as to greatly undermine his health. In such a condition, self control is likely to be much weakened. The result might thus be that the old masochistic trait of pleasure in self suffering would reappear and not be recognized for what it was. It might, in the weakened distracted condition, even be mistaken for some peculiar blessing, and thus the tendency to perversion be reinforced. In a weakened condition old traits are known to reappear, and the perversion of traits in such a condition is peculiarly easy. Possibly some of the revolting extremes in ascetic history are such unfortunate instances of perversion.

In summary, it must be observed that the effects of ascetic practice upon the psychological organization of the individual are dependent upon his original pattern of traits, the degree of his development of self control, and the nature of his religious ideal. It will be recalled that the practice of mysticism under certain conditions improved the synthesis and the efficiency of the individual, and that under other conditions it weakened the synthesis and made the individual socially less effective. Exactly the same may be said of ascetic practices. With certain combinations of original traits, development of self control, and of religious

ideal, the result may be not only the achievement of the ideal but a greatly enhanced personal efficiency; with other combinations the result may be deleterious. Each individual case must then be analyzed by itself as a specific problem.

In that oft quoted chapter of James's on habit, one of the maxims is to keep the "faculty of effort alive" by regular practice. The reader is advised to deny himself something now and then or force himself to do something occasionally in order to keep this possibility of self control and new adjustment fresh and active. Students of religious behavior will be reminded of this chapter in James when they are confronted by the occasional mild use of ascetic practices. During religious festival periods the adherents of certain faiths are accustomed to deny themselves some desires or pleasures which at other times are freely enjoyed. They give up candy for the period, or the eating of desserts at dinner, or going to the theater, or something of the sort. As a religious exercise the purpose may be that of establishing a frequent reminder of the religious thoughts they especially wish to keep often in mind during that particular season. The items denied at such times may be only such as might be social distractions from the religious exercises preferred. Whatever the religious values of such practices may be, they certainly must contribute much to the consciousness of continued capacity for self control and self discipline.

Finally one must not fail to recognize that there may be a social psychological effect of ascetic practices. By means of his peculiarly different life the ascetic may

keep alive certain desirable ideals and even attract attention to new ones, when the mere preaching of them might be of little avail.⁶

⁶ For useful presentations of asceticism see—Hardman, O., *The Ideals of Ascetism*, New York, Macmillan, 1924 (Has excellent bibliography); Josey, C. C., *The Psychology of Religion*, Chap. 11, New York, Macmillan, 1927; *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*; James, Wm., *Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 296-310; Stratton, G. M., *Psychology of the Religious Life*, Chap. 4.

CHAPTER XIII

RELIGIOUS EXERCISES: RETREAT, EVANGELISM

In the history and literature of religion, retreat as a religious exercise has a large and valued place; but, strangely enough, it seems to have rarely found recognition in the literature on the psychology of religion. The practice of retreat, while perhaps not so ancient as some religious customs, is very old. As it is known and used today, retreat dates from the life and work of St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556)¹ who developed and adapted some earlier schemes into what has long been known as his *Spiritual Exercises*.²

St. Ignatius of Loyola, prior to his conversion, had been a soldier accustomed to the training of the bodies of men. After his conversion, he became interested in the training of the human soul, and established his famous set of exercises for that purpose. One distinguishing feature of his exercises is that the souls subjected to them shall be under the direction of a "retreat master." Perhaps this is an influence from his drill master days in the army. With some exceptions this practice of going through the exercise of retreat under a director continues to the present time.

¹ For biography see Van Dyke, Paul, *Ignatius Loyola, the Founder of the Jesuits*. New York, Scribners, 1926. Pp. 381.

² *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola* (Trans. by Mullan). New York, Kenedy, 1914.

Program of Retreat.—It is the custom of those who seek the benefits of retreat to gather in some place of isolation, in a college dormitory, in a monastery or a convent, where all the necessities of living may be had for the period of the retreat. Business for the time being is left behind, even the newspapers and magazines of the day are excluded. While the original plan of St. Ignatius assumed a retreat period of a month, much shorter periods are now the rule. Sometimes a week is given to it; sometimes but two or three days. During the period of the retreat, the waking hours of the participant are carefully programed. Just what to think about, what prayers to say, what scripture to read, when to attend mass and vespers and matins, when to gather for instruction by the retreat master, when to eat, when to relax, when to meditate and about what,—all is carefully programed and adhered to with military-like precision.³

But it is to the course of topics for prayer and meditation that the student of psychology will turn for his basis of interpretation. While many variations may be found, as such programs are made up by individual retreat masters, the basis for them all is to be found in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, which every student will do well to examine. The aim of this manual for the first week is to stir “contrition, sorrow and tears for their sins,” and the topics for meditation are concerned with different kinds of sin and the punishment in hell therefor. There is emphasis upon the sins of the retreatant and the shame felt for them. Then follows

³ Typical daily programs may be found in Elliott, Walter, *A Retreat for Nuns*. Washington, Apostolic Mission House, 1925.

meditation upon the wisdom, omnipotence, justice, and goodness of God with emphasis upon the contrast in each case with the ignorance, the weakness, the sinfulness, and the maliciousness of the retreatant. Here it will be observed is that same widening of the gap between the ideal and the actual observed above in the production of the evangelical conversion. There follows a meditation upon hell with definite emphasis upon feeling the pains of the damned and the fear of those pains. The retreatant is urged to imagine visually the condition of those in hell and to seek to arouse auditory images of their cries, olfactory images of the smoke, gustatory images of the bitter taste, and cutaneous images of the fire which burns. At the conclusion of this first week of meditation, confession is recommended.

The second week is devoted to meditations on the proper way of living. The ideal presented is the life of Jesus, numerous items from which are arranged for meditation. All through the program for this week hints and suggestions may be seen which, if effective, would stir a seeking attitude and a greater willingness to give up old ways. The directions are searching. They would reach to the simple and humble details of life. The concluding emphasis comes out clearly upon charity, kindness and the love of others. Resolutions for a better plan of life are apparently expected as one effect of the first two weeks of participation in the retreat exercise.

The last two weeks are devoted to meditations upon the Passion, the Resurrection and the Ascension, with a concluding meditation upon the love of God.

Nature of Retreat Experience.—Reflection upon this programs reveals that here is the same sequence

of thought and feeling which has been so often presented as that which characterizes the genuine Christian religious experience. At the outset the emphasis upon the greatness of God and the weakness of man, supplemented by the effects of isolation for the avowed purpose of coming into the presence of God and to the feeling of that presence, is designed to stir the emotions of wonder and inferiority. There is, also, a very definite effort to inject the fear factor into the experience. Then comes the giving up of the old ways, the adoption of the better way growing out of the meditations upon the life of Jesus, and the molding of the new plan of life under the influence of such meditation. The later meditations of the exercise are designed to bring clearly to consciousness the love of God, the love of God for man, and that such a love should permeate the life of every individual, this retreatant in particular. Emphases designed to stir the tenderness emotion appear strongly in the concluding portions of the exercise.

Retreat in Protestant Church.—In the Protestant Christian church there seems to be nothing quite comparable to the retreat of the Roman Catholic. Here and there individual groups, usually of clergymen, retire together for religious purposes and report similar benefits, but these have not been developed to a like degree of thoroughness as a religious exercise. And then there are spasmodic “movements” which appear and have their day, each of which is an attempt at the systematization of private devotions.

The “Quiet Hour” movement and “Morning Watch,” with their plans for prayer and Bible reading

and meditation, are sufficiently similar to the retreat as religious exercises to be worthy of passing attention. Sometimes these show a striking similarity, or approximation to, or perhaps even the influence of the Spiritual Exercises. A notable example is that learned and wise devotional manual by Harry Emerson Fosdick entitled *The Meaning of Prayer*.⁴ This is arranged as a series of prayers and meditations and daily readings for a period of ten weeks. The following abstract will reveal the course of thought and feeling from week to week:—

FIRST WEEK: The naturalness of Prayer.

Prayer an inherent feature of human nature. Many fail of its benefits through irregular use.

SECOND WEEK: Prayer as Communion with God.

Consideration of prayer failures. Emphasis upon communion rather than upon begging. Desirability of achieving presence of God in individual life.

THIRD WEEK: God's Care for the Individual.

Devoted to the elimination of the notion that prayer is merely a pious practice.

FOURTH WEEK: Prayer and the Goodness of God.

Emphasis upon making the life of the individual one which may be used by God for the realization of His purpose.

FIFTH WEEK: Hindrances and Difficulties.

Emphasis upon self discipline, preparation, patience, as necessary to achieving communion with God. Advice and encouragement for those who seek and apparently fail.

SIXTH WEEK: Prayer and the Reign of Law.

Advice toward elimination of another difficulty in the path of achieving communion with God.

⁴ New York, Association Press, 1919.

SEVENTH WEEK: Unanswered Prayer.

Helping the aspiring individual over yet another difficulty.

EIGHTH WEEK: Prayer as Dominant Desire.

A continuation of the problem of unanswered prayer with emphasis upon the importance of developing high character as essential basis to success in prayer.

NINTH WEEK: Prayer as a Battlefield.

Through prayer the worries, the anxieties, the temptations of life are conquered or eliminated. Effort to ascertain the will of God and to obtain power to live according to that plan. Continuation of emphasis upon the achievement of character.

TENTH WEEK: Unselfishness in Prayer.

Emphasis upon prayer for friends, upon unselfishness, upon love. Prayer for others, brotherhood.

Examination of this manual reveals some interesting psychological features which may be in part perceived from the abstract just given. Whoever uses it for devotional purposes must early be stirred to thoughts of personal defect and inferiority. The first meditations assume inadequate if not improper habits in the religious life of the reader and especially a misinterpretation of prayer and the relationship of God to prayer. The serious consideration of such thoughts must arouse contrition in which the feeling of inferiority is a large factor. In the prayers given and in all the stress upon communion with God and God's plan, there is no lack of that which will arouse wonder. Interestingly enough there is scarcely a suggestion of fear in the whole program. Herein is a very great difference from the Spiritual Exercises. In the fourth week there is the emphasis upon abandoning the individual will and the

acceptation of the will of God, that same acceptation of the new which appeared as an essential feature of the conversion program and of the religious experience. Then follows a series of meditations and prayers for a period of five weeks which are most interestingly remindful of the periods of "dryness" of the great mystics and especially of "the dark night of the soul." Matters of self discipline, preparation, elimination of doubts, and the molding of a character worthy of the blessing of divine communion are presented. The concluding week is devoted to love, the tenderness of the religious experience, love and prayer for the well-being of others. The orientation feature of all this must be everywhere evident.

Effects of Retreat.—The retreat form of religious exercise has not only endured through several centuries but seems to have grown in favor in recent years. It must therefore have some very conspicuous effects upon those who participate. The student of psychology is not surprised to learn from those who practice retreat regularly that they experience not only a marked re-establishment and deepening of their own religious faith; but that they also achieve a new poise, a new peace of mind, a new steadiness of purpose.⁵ The reasons for this are not hard to find. In other chapters of this book emphasis has already been placed upon individual differences in the degree of the personal synthesis or integration. Some people are so loosely organized that their self control is poor, they are given to impulsive acts, they easily suffer conflicts and

⁵ For a more complete presentation of this see John Howley's *Psychology and Mystical Experience*, especially Chap. 1 of Part 1.

develop complexes. With such people hysterical disturbances are easily aroused. Others are normally much better integrated but in the hurry and stress of an active life many things are done thoughtlessly. The lack of due consideration means the development of patterns which are not well organized with other patterns. While the normally endowed may not perhaps become so poorly synthesized through hasty living as to be hysterical, they are, nevertheless, best understood if thought of as being on a road which leads in that direction.

If poorly organized or poorly synthesized people, whether so by nature or through the haste of living, should pause for a time to reflect, to recall their past, to think over their conduct, to plan their future, to consider the proprieties and the responsibilities and the idealities of life, the inevitable effect would be that of better organization. No wonder that people who do so report a new poise. In a purely secular manner it would be very effective; but when tied up with the consideration of God and man's duty in the light of accepted religious teachings, it must be highly effective. In the Roman Catholic form of the retreat, it will be recalled, a confession was included. This, as doubtless most readers know, is an oral confession to another person, who has been especially authorized for the purpose. Bringing to conscious reflection the events of the past, thinking them over, and recognizing the errors in them has long been known to aid in the development of synthesis; but the oral confession of them, talking about them to another, is still more effective.

The similarity here between retreat and the procedure of psychoanalysis has not escaped recognition. L. J.

Walker, himself a member of the Society of Jesus, has astutely presented this.⁶ Both in retreat and in psychoanalysis the life of the individual is freely and meditatively reviewed, faced frankly, talked about, and a better way determined. But in the psychoanalytic procedure there is much emphasis upon the dynamic nature of unconscious forces. Healthy adjustment comes as a process of catharsis and reëducation. It is a thoroughly mechanical thing, the dynamic for which is found within the individual himself. In the use of the Spiritual Exercises, or of any good retreat manual for that matter, there is the same self examination, the same frank facing of the facts, the same confession, the same acceptance of new ways of living, the same effects of suggestion; but, in place of the emphasis upon a dynamic unconscious there is the emphasis upon the direct personal effect of the power of God. And this emphasis is made to a mind prepared to believe stoutly in the existence of God and in the certainty of such direct influences. Walker obviously believes that the latter is the more effective means of readjustment.

The effect of retreat exercises in the formation of the religious sentiment must not be overlooked. While it does not occur so frequently as the ordinary exercise of worship, what it may lose by infrequency of repetition it makes up in thoroughness and in intensity. Where church attendance is the occasional effect of from one to two hours of participation in a religious exercise, retreat is the effect of several days, or a week and sometimes even a month, of concentrated effort.

⁶ Walker, Leslie J., "The Psychology of the Spiritual Exercises." *Hibbert Journal*, 1921, 19, 401-413.

Retreat if regularly practiced at wisely distributed intervals must also have much effect upon the habits of attention. The popular mind continues to think about a so-called "power of concentration." People who have this are to psychologists merely those who have certain habits well developed which aid in holding desired topics or situations in the foreground of consciousness, and, likewise, keeping others out. The latter is quite as important as the former. In still other words it is a matter of self discipline. Many people dislike to make the effort necessary to attend to something and to keep from attending to something else. Many people prefer, except perhaps in matters which concern their gainful occupations, to have their attention held by what takes place around them. Radios, movies, vaudeville shows, and illustrated supplements hold attention without participating effort; but to think seriously, to meditate, without going to sleep and without being constantly distracted to other things, requires effort. The consequence of frequently repeated exertions of effort to attend is exactly like the consequence of all other human efforts that are repeated. There is the tendency to habit formation. Fortunate is the person who is trained to think without disturbance on any selected topic for long enough to make his thought worth while. People who regularly drill themselves in the art of meditation upon religious subjects must eventually establish a personal organization which differentiates them, at least with regard to religious behavior, from those who do not. Herein may lie the clue to yet other differences between people of different religious practices.

Retreat and Introversion.—Retreat exercises are obviously introvertive in their nature, but there is nothing about the available retreat manuals which would produce a permanent introversion. The whole spirit of them is the preparation of the retreatant for a more efficient life in this world. They provide for a period of temporary introversion which if entered into with the proper preparatory attitude can only result in a reaction to active participation in the affairs of life with a better plan and a better self control. Where the attitude which leads to introversion is that of escape, the goal is the introversion. Reaction from the introversion is not desired or is accepted reluctantly. Going into introversion with such an attitude might, especially if aided by a poor personal synthesis and an accumulation of maladjustments, result in genuine morbidity of mind. But certainly no one familiar with the content of the established forms of retreat would seek a religious retreat as an escape from the responsibilities of life.

The Evangelical Exercise.—These are to be seen in their purest form in the evangelistic campaign meeting designed for the purposes of “saving souls.” In an earlier chapter it was pointed out that the underlying motive of the evangelical form of religious exercise might be a desire to bring into the lives of others the same peace and satisfaction already experienced; and that it might also be motivated by a duty concept, obedience to specific commands of some religious founder. Whatever the motive, the goal is the production of a conversion experience in those who have never known it, or in those who have “wandered from the

faith." Some seek to produce this in a high degree of intensity. Others condemn such and prefer to produce conversions that are less spectacular in their external manifestations.

While the order of presentation of items in the evangelical exercise varies greatly, the content and the general form is much the same. The student of psychology will observe upon entering a place designated for such a purpose that the appearance of the interior of the building and the physical arrangement are often quite different from those used in religious exercises for worship. The building may be purely an auditorium, often quickly and roughly built for this purpose only. There is space provided for a large choir and the platform is often relatively spacious. The few decorations seem designed more for the concealment of the ugliness of the building than for any religious effect. Thus there is little, if anything, in the physical surroundings to stir wonder in the audience, that essential factor of admiration and awe. The thoughts produced may subsequently do so, however.

The items in such an exercise, when enumerated, look very much like those of an order of worship:—singing of hymns, prayers, special music usually in solo form, scripture readings, and preaching. Sometimes there is added to this list a period for personal testimonies about the conversion experience. But while the order of the evangelical exercise appears to resemble that of the formal worship, the apparent resemblance is due to the phrasing of the items. The content is very different, especially in the placement of emphasis. There is a pervading stress upon sin, salvation, and the joy of

those who have been through conversion. Every item is pregnant with suggestions to the unconverted of what is hoped and expected of them. Every item is designed to prepare the mind of the unconverted for the great experience.

At the conclusion of the sermon, and sometimes merged into it, there is the "altar call" or the summons to "hit the saw-dust trail" or the invitation to "come to the mourners' bench." In substance these phrases mean that the moment has come for the crucial point of the conversion process to take place. Actually the expectation is that those who are in the process, or those who have been convinced of its desirability, shall come forward in a distinctive manner, where the "workers," as the assistants to the preacher are called, may approach and possibly aid in the production of the conversion experience. This may be accompanied by the audience joining in the singing of some affecting hymn of appeal.

Obviously the emphasis in such an exercise is not upon the orderly production in each member of the audience of that succession of emotional changes called the religious experience. The emphasis is upon whatever will attract and hold the attention, upon the retraction of the field of consciousness in order that the individual shall be more suggestible and less hampered by inhibitions, upon stirring the emotions of shame and regret especially, and of presenting suggestions to the kind of action desired in the most effective manner possible. It is inevitable, however, that such efforts should react upon the religious who participate in such a manner as to produce either a religious experience or an

emotional excitement which is mistaken for religion. It is also possible that people who participate often in evangelistic endeavors may become so trained that their religious emotions are aroused only by such a program and the evangelistic attitude.

CHAPTER XIV

DISTORTIONS OF RELIGIOUS BEHAVIOR

Studies of both the normal and the abnormal personality have in recent years revealed much concerning the causation of human motives, beliefs and the exceptional in human behavior. It has been found that the memories of associated disagreeable experiences form constellations, or complexes, and that these in turn have a far reaching influence upon thoughts and conduct. People so troubled seek to escape the disagreeable by a forced absorption in other matters, which often misleads the onlooker who is unfamiliar with the motivations of conduct. Others who are weak, or incompetent, or fearful for some reason, seek the easy and the familiar as a means of escape from a disagreeable present situation. As all of these disagreeable features of life play their part in that world to which religion aids in bringing about an adjustment, religious behavior may likewise be affected by complexes and by escape motives resulting in distortions or abnormalities.

False Sanctification.—In his presentation of sanctification, Starbuck has pointed out that there are occasional individuals who withdraw into themselves, leave the church and all civic and social responsibilities because of a dominant notion of religious superiority. Such a withdrawal and such an indifference the reader

will recognize at once as not characteristic of a wholesome religious experience.

These exceptional instances of sanctification are characterized by excessive criticism of others. Whatever others think or do, especially in matters religious, is wrong and there is no hesitation at first about telling others of their waywardness. At the same time the individual appears to think of himself, if he thinks about it at all, as somehow superior or even perfect in comparison. Such a person is obviously ill-adjusted to the human factors of his world. And this is also manifest in social and political and financial matters as well as religious. Eventually such a person may refuse to have anything more to do with other people than is absolutely necessary for continued existence. Charitable works cease and there may be even a complete withdrawal from church affiliation. There is a belief that the perfect way is to be found through the inner personal communion with God.

To the student familiar with certain forms of diseased mental life this all has a familiar ring. He will at once characterize it as paranoid. The individual suffers that kind of a fixed belief which is classed as a delusion. And it has all the features of those delusions which have grown out of social maladjustment. Perhaps there are organic conditions which assist in bringing about this distortion of thought. These may be discoverable for a physician, and they may be obscure for every kind of investigator. But the history is evident. The person has failed to make an adjustment. His religion is inadequate. There is a conflict of motives; there is unhappiness and the impulse to escape by a retreat into

the inner life. There is something childish about all this, too, especially when the individual reaches the "I-won't-play" stage in which there is the complete refusal of all external contacts. This is what the psychoanalysts term a regression to childish ways of response or escape. The individual is becoming a child again but not in the humility of submission to the ways of a fatherlike God and the willingness to be obedient. He is escaping such submission by running away into a petty self-glorifying belief which comes more and more to dominate his life. Eventually it may even bring an aberrant sort of satisfaction. The person who has so escaped may claim to have experienced "sanctification," or he may give to it some other term supposedly indicative of a very special and superior kind of blessing, but the intelligent observer will not be misled by it.

There is a notable relationship here to the distinction, elsewhere presented, between Quietism and the approved form of mysticism. The Quietist, while not perhaps so much of a crank and so generally disagreeable as the false sanctificationist, is likewise escaping from the difficulties of life into a negative indifference characterized by notions of superiority and the absence of consciousness of social responsibility. The true mystic, on the other hand, resembles the true instance of sanctification. Both have found such an orientation in life, such a contact with God, as they interpret it, and such an understanding of the divine plan for them that they live actively in the affairs of this world. In true sanctification and in the accepted form of mysticism, the goal of religious experience has been achieved; but

in the Quietist, and still more in the false sanctificationist, there is a distortion of that experience, perhaps by the development of a complex or certainly through some disturbing feature, into just that kind of introverted and regressive adjustment which the modern psychologist has learned to class as morbid or unwholesome.

Speaking with Tongues.—In the meetings of those religious sects where emotions are stirred to a high pitch of intensity with little restraint, there may be observed a form of religious behavior which is termed the “gift of tongues.” The uninitiated observer sees some member of the sect talking fluently in the highly figurative language to which they are given. As he speaks, he becomes more and more excited. As the excitement intensifies, the utterances become less and less coherent until they become a mere unintelligible verbigeration. Close observation may reveal, even before loss of coherency is evident, certain abnormal twitchings of the voluntary musculature of the speaker’s body. While this speaking with tongues is the usual form, instances are reported of individuals who sing in the same incoherent fashion.¹

All students of the New Testament are familiar with the earlier history of this form of religious behavior. On the day of Pentecost there was a great revival of religious emotion which is described (Acts: 2) as finding expression in much speaking. Listeners were surprised to hear preaching in languages which were not those of the speakers. Some bystanders said that they were “filled with new wine.” Paul wrote much about this

¹ Pratt, J. B., *The Religious Consciousness*, pp. 186-7.

gift of tongues (1 Cor.: 12, 13, 14) and he seems to have known it as an incoherent verbigeration much as it appears today. He presents it as unintelligible and therefore unprofitable to any except the speaker, and seems on the whole to doubt the wisdom of its cultivation. The Apostle saw a very close relationship between this tongue phenomenon and the state of prophecy, and that is the tendency of current interpretations. It seems to be a mistake to think of the gift of tongues as first appearing on the day of Pentecost. Apparently it was well known among the ancient Hebrews and by them related to the prophetic state.²

Whatever may have been the nature of the utterances on the day of Pentecost, a careful examination of the present-day instances said to be speaking with tongues fails to reveal any indication of an actual language. There is no reason to believe that these utterances evidence anything more than a disturbed functioning of the language habits of the individual involved.³ Syllables common in the language habitually used by the speaker and occasionally even whole words appear. Sometimes a foreign word is included, which need not cause wonder or speculation because most people know a few words from other languages. Occasionally it is reported that utterances are recognized to be in a language unknown to the speaker, and the implication of the miraculous is brought forward. Such reports must be taken very cautiously. The appearance of an occasional word or syllable that is identifiable does not mean

² Cutten, G. B., *Speaking With Tongues*. New Haven, Yale Press, 1927. See especially p. 164.

³ For excellent examples see, Cutten, G. B., *Speaking With Tongues*, p. 174 and Pratt, J. B., *The Religious Consciousness*, pp. 186-7.

that a foreign language is being spoken, that thoughts are being uttered in a foreign language; and it is also probable that such reports are influenced by the emotional state of those who make them. Furthermore it cannot be substantiated that anything of any importance has ever been revealed through this speaking with tongues. Paul apparently failed to discover any edification through such phenomena in his own time.

The psychological nature of this state in which the individual speaks "with tongues" is now pretty well known. All the features fit easily into certain familiar forms of behavior in hysterical disturbances. The prophetic state it will be recalled was an ecstatic state in which inhibitions were largely relaxed and the emotional reactions of the individual to moral and political conditions allowed a comparatively free expression. But the individual in the prophetic ecstatic state remained still sufficiently well organized to have the expression appear through the channels of intelligible language. Inhibitions are overwhelmed in the prophetic state, but the nervous organization of the individual is not seriously disturbed. The next step in the direction of weakening of the nervous organization is the break up of the finer habit coördinations, of speech for instance. And that is exactly what happened at times with the prophets. From impassioned prophecy they passed into incoherency. The language habits gave way under the storm of emotional stimulation. When the member of a sect which believes in the divine nature of these more extreme forms of behavior is emotionally aroused to the point that he is "moved to speak," he is in a state which is psychologically comparable to that of the

prophet. But, as he continues to speak, eventually his emotions so flood the speech mechanisms with excitations that they no longer function in the normal manner. The result is the "speaking with tongues" phenomenon.

The unprofitable nature of this mode of religious behavior properly raises the question of why it has been retained. The prophetic state is valuable. Great religious expressions of lasting value have come out of it. But why should this unprofitable distortion of the prophetic state have been continued, as it has, all down through the history of Christianity? The answer is doubtless to be found in the influence of the persisting belief that the state is somehow a manifestation of special divine intervention. It will be recalled that in prescientific times all insanities were supposed to be due to supernatural influence, demon possession perhaps. And because of this notion of supernatural factors in abnormal states people so afflicted were given special consideration. Prophets were speaking great truths which were believed to be direct revelations from the divine. Then it is not surprising if their abnormal states should also have been interpreted as due to some special divine afflatus. The practice is associated with the most sacred period in the early days of Christianity and bears the sanction, although somewhat hesitant, of the Apostle Paul.

It has long been recognized that hysterical states are more easily produced and reproduced if the social setting manifests approval of and desire for the appearance of such. The belief in the desirable and supernatural nature of the tongue phenomenon thus supplies the best possible social setting for the production of the

phenomenon itself. And, it will be recalled that one does not observe speaking with tongues among the more reserved and better educated of Christian sects. It appears where belief is intense and where the abnormal is still looked upon as desirable and divine and not as a pathological condition.

A curious and somewhat incidental manifestation of the belief that there is some virtue in the "tongue" process itself is found in the occasional voluntary effort to reproduce it. Cutten says that in the early days of the Mormon movement individuals would be unexpectedly called upon in a meeting to speak with tongues. Obviously all that could be produced under such circumstances would be but the voluntary effort to juggle syllables in such a manner as to give some appearance of a language. The result would be much like the productions of children who play at speaking a foreign tongue. The state of mind of an individual so speaking is of course quite different from that of the true tongue state described above. Here there is full voluntary control and the effort to do something which is not well understood, but is naïvely believed to be desirable if not virtuous in itself.

Apocalypticism, or the exposition of beliefs concerning the end of the world and the establishment of the millennium, has frequently developed hysterically irrational conduct. Histories of Christianity reveal that beliefs in the early coming of the end of the world have been recurrent and often productive of emotional excitement. Newspapers frequently report contemporary groups accepting the doctrine with some new interpretation which they believe to give them the exact date for

the end of the present dispensation. The nature of the preparations which such people make for the expected second coming of Christ attract for a time more than local attention and then are forgotten until news comes of some other movement of like nature but with some new scheme for determining the exact date.

One of the most famous of these was known as the Millerite movement which had the date for the end of the world set for the year 1843. It was started by one William Miller who believed that he had found an interpretation of the scriptures which made it possible to determine the time of the second coming of Christ. Others gradually came to believe in him until eventually many thousands had adopted the belief and there were groups of his followers in many communities throughout the United States. As the momentous date approached the believers proceeded to prepare for the end. Farms were neglected or sold and the proceeds given away. Estates were disposed of. Ascension robes were made. And on the last night when Jesus was expected to come with a sounding of trumpets the faithful gathered in convenient meeting places for the great event. It is easy to believe the tales that are told of that hysterical night of waiting; and of how the dazed believers slipped broken-heartedly away in the gray dawn of a morning which they had thought would never come.⁴

The familiar features of the psychology of crowd conduct are to be seen in such movements. The vehemence and conviction of some leader holds the attention and limits the critical capacities of the individuals in the audience. The nature of the topics pre-

⁴ Sears, Clara E., *Days of Delusion*. Boston, Houghton, 1924. Pp. 264.

sented stirs emotion and so, with the heightened suggestibility and the emotional excitement, conviction is easily produced. 'It is a common saying that if one could accept the assumptions or first premises of a paranoid mind, one might not find it so difficult to accept the conclusions to which the paranoid mind comes. In other words, the processes of reasoning aside from the determination of the original assumptions are not so illogical. So, too, in the instances of apocalyptic excitement, if one could accept their belief that the world was literally to come to an end at a certain time, the remainder of their conduct might not seem so absurd. If one sincerely believed that the end of the world was to come at a certain rapidly approaching hour, and that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, would at that moment appear in some spectacular fashion coming down from the heavens, one might experience almost any conceivable complication of emotional excitement and with it much disturbance of thought and action.

The crux of such movements lies not then in the hysterical conduct of those who believe in the imminence of the crack of doom, but rather in the circumstances which bring about the belief. Here it is necessary to move cautiously and to recall that there may be much individual difference in the backgrounds leading up to the acceptance of such a doctrine. The circumstances of its preaching may be those which produce the first genuine religious experience for some; for others the fervor of those particular meetings may bring a renewed religious experience. Such minds readily accept the teachings of the leader. A very large percentage, at least, of those participating actively in such

movements are of very limited education and probably of limited native ability. Such would make a critical treatment of the doctrine all the more unlikely, even in moments of quiet and isolation. And then, too, the nature of the doctrine itself is such as to stir emotion profoundly. This would aid in the establishment of the belief and it would also provoke the individual to talk of it with others, which in turn contributes to the consciousness of certainty. Such people usually believe in the verbal inspiration of the Bible and the doctrine is presented with much support by scriptural quotation. Individuals known to be prone to hysterical disturbances are often found in such groups. While these are the general factors contributing to the acceptance of such a belief, the examination of individual case histories would doubtless reveal others peculiar to certain individuals.

Fanaticism can best be understood if thought of as a distortion, or a group of distortions, of normal religious experience. Just what shall be classed as fanatical cannot be determined with exactitude because such distinctions are dependent upon social judgments. What in one social setting and at one period of history would be generally accepted as fanatical, at another time might be looked upon as merely eccentric, or even wholly acceptable. Furthermore, in any given social situation there may be mild degrees of distortion in the direction of fanaticism which would scarcely be called fanatical. One might for instance begin with normal enthusiasm, from that move into eccentricity, subsequently into inordinate devotion, into mild fanaticism, and eventually into the most aggravated

form of fanaticism. The religious cranks of any community would thus be instances in a mild degree of that which when exaggerated becomes fanatical.

An old definition ⁵ is to the effect that fanaticism is "enthusiasm inflamed by hate." It is a serviceable definition especially if expanded in the light of recent psychological thought. One must begin with enthusiasm, and here of course with religious enthusiasm. It will be recalled that the normal religious experience leaves the individual at peace, enjoying the consolation of a new orientation, of a new and better adjustment to life, and also, especially in the Christian religious experience, there is the impulse to kindly and protective actions for those who are in trouble. To that man or woman who has had an exceptionally hard struggle with life and its adjustments, the relief and the comfort and the consolation of religion is likely to come in a peculiar richness. Such persons may be made so very happy that they not only long intensely for the coming of the same joy into the lives of others, but also devote much time and energy to the realization of that desire. Their behavior may properly be termed enthusiasm. If their efforts are successful their own emotions are intensified. Not every one is capable of such enthusiasms; and some are apparently capable of developing a high state of enthusiasm with great facility. These differences will probably be explainable some day in terms of individual differences of temperament, but of such differences all too little is known at present. The term enthusiasm as ordinarily used connotes an intense or ardent devotion to some special cause. Here it would be devotion

⁵ See Baldwin's *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology*.

to the cause of bringing the benefits of religion into the lives of others.

But the life of one dominated by such an enthusiasm is filled with obstacles. Others are often unresponsive. Spreading the good news of the happiness to be found through religion is not as easy as it first appears. And then, too, the religious enthusiast finds many impulses from within himself and many social customs which not only hinder his efforts to evangelize others but which also disturb his efforts to maintain for himself the kind of life he considers necessary. These obstacles become for him the "world, the flesh and the devil" or whatever best fits his particular brand of theology. The success of his own religious life and the success of the cause to which he is devoted necessitate combating these evils. Much experience with disagreeable and thwarting objects builds the sentiment called hate.⁶ And this hate sentiment is responsive to those people or customs which he has recognized as obstacles to his religion and his religious purposes. Thus do his religious activities become complicated with hate. He comes to hate his enemies.

In such a person the religious sentiment has had a sentiment of hate grafted upon it, or, at least, developed in a very close relation to it. Where this hate factor is relatively weak and the religious sentiment with its tenderness feature relatively dominant, the individual would scarcely be classed as a fanatic. But if the hate sentiment is permitted, and is stimulated into active development, until it plays a prominent part in the

⁶ For a full presentation of the hate sentiment and of its relation to the love sentiment see McDougall, Wm., *Social Psychology*, Chap. 5.

behavior of that person, then the religious emotions of the individual would be so colored by fear and especially anger, prominent features of the hate sentiment, as to make him clearly a fanatic. The kindness is largely displaced by the too easily aroused anger.

The rôle of belief in this shift from the simple religious experience and sentiment to the high complication with hate is significant, but there is necessity for caution in its interpretation. If the individual believes stoutly in the existence of two opposing forces in the universe, good and evil, God and the Devil, and that his own life is an aspect of that struggle, then he is quite likely to develop, and to develop easily, a thorough-going hatred for all that he believes to be of the devil. On the other hand, if the individual's belief in the existence of a personal devil is weak or weakening, if he believes profoundly that all things are the creation of a God which is a God of love, and especially if he believes that he must love his enemies no matter how wicked and aggressive their opposition, then that person will, because of these beliefs, develop hatreds but very slowly. Such a person is far less likely to become a true fanatic.

But herein lies the necessity for caution in this interpretation. Fanaticism strictly speaking may be attributable to a religious sentiment which has been distorted through involvement with hate, but individuals may also be called fanatics because of the nature of their beliefs and acts and not because of any disturbance from a hate sentiment. A religious devotee may belong to a faith that believes all other faiths should be destroyed. And that there will be

special rewards in the future life for him who kills many heretics. Such a belief would lead to acts condemned as brutal and inhuman by those of other and kindlier faiths. If a person believed that it was the kindly thing to kill one of another faith who could not be converted, brutal as the act would appear to be to those of another faith, it could not be said that such a believer was motivated by hatred. Much repetition of such acts would probably tend to arouse also that sadistic trait which seems latent in most human beings. Reports of the raids in Asia Minor include tales of murder, of maiming, and of rapine. Such a combination indicates a distortion of the religious sentiment by the intense activation of the sex drive and allied impulses. While this does not strictly conform to the psychological characterization of fanaticism, the brutality of its manifestations leads frequently to its classification as such. It is merely of importance that the psychologically minded student should observe that there is a difference in the motivation. In one there is a confusion with hatred aided by belief, in the other there is confusion with sadism aided by belief. It is also quite possible that the latter form might be further complicated by a development of hate for all non-believers.

One must also be cautious in the classification of what is merely enthusiasm coupled with ignorance or lack of good taste. There are many people who have had stirring religious experiences, which have brought them much happiness, who are at the same time lacking in culture or refinement. They do not know the ways of polite society. Such people, in the expressions of their enthusiasm, are quite likely to offend the more refined

of the population. The over enthusiastic but ignorant woman who rises in a street car and prays noisily for the passengers can scarcely be termed a fanatic in the technical sense, but she is most certainly violating good taste. The impulse to such violation of good taste may be reinforced by theological doctrines which have been uncritically accepted. Such people are more like students celebrating a great athletic victory than they are like true fanatics.

In the consideration of fanaticism, it must be further kept in mind that some, possibly many, of those classed as fanatics within the limits of any religion or sect may very likely be subjects of a mild form of insanity. The delusions of paranoia are not infrequently of a religious nature. These often result in the development of quite bizarre religious beliefs, including notions of active persecution by those of other faiths. Individuals suffering such forms of paranoia may commit acts so extravagant or so violent as to result in their being called fanatics. But there is in their organization a far greater distortion than the mere complication with hatred for that which is evil. The delusions of paranoia are very often, some experts think always, but part of a large group of symptoms which if carefully studied will reveal some form of mental deterioration. The detection of those whose acts are due to mental disease is not easy even for experts in psychopathology, and much harm may be done by premature and false diagnoses, hence it is necessary to exercise the greatest caution. But it is none the less necessary to recognize that mental disease may be a factor in the production of religious fanatics.

Aberrant Militancy.—Still one other form of distortion of religious behavior must be recognized. Like the instances already presented, it is not to be found in any one religious community exclusively; and unlike them, it is far less often recognized as a distortion. Observers of religious behavior will not infrequently come upon persons of any faith or type of theology who are militantly aggressive for the particular sect or doctrine which they represent. They seek to convert everyone to their way of thinking, and, failing that, to force everyone by whatever means may be possible to conform to their ways. They are so intense about it, so extravagant in their assertions and demands, even at times approaching violence, that they make themselves conspicuous and provoke the observer to suspect some exceptional motivation.

Psychologists have long since come to recognize that excited intensity in the advocacy of any cause often betrays a poorly controlled desire to do or to be the opposite. The intensity with which the cause is advocated, as well as the nature of the cause itself, serves as a defense against the manifestation of that opposite motive of which the individual is ashamed or even afraid. The extravagant activities of many anti-vivisectionists often serve to conceal a deep lying desire to torture. The individual is ashamed of this sadistic impulse, this tendency to delight in tales of horror and suffering, and therefore seeks to repress it. But it is too strong for him, too strong for mere voluntary control. Consequently he keeps the undesired impulse down, out of mind, by his much occupation with anti-vivisectional activities and the intensity with which he participates in them.

Much the same type of complexity of motivation may underlie the behavior of the excessively militant religiousist. The function of religion, it will be recalled, is to bring peace and consolation to human beings who must adjust themselves to a world which they can but imperfectly comprehend. So long as the religious experience and the belief accepted serve that purpose, so long will the individual be at peace. But the need for a new adjustment arises when doubts are entertained concerning the old belief. These excessively militant people, when compared with other forms of extravagance in conduct, stir a suspicion that their old belief is no longer bringing them the satisfaction and giving them the aid in adjustment which it formerly did.

If this is true, then some other features follow inevitably. They are surrounded by those who have found satisfaction in some other conception of the world, in a different form of belief. These others are seen to be happy and content, and they are the very ones whose ways and whose faith had all along been denounced as a menace to true religion. But to give up the old faith which has been so long believed and taught and preached would be an admission of error, an admission no one likes to make, especially if one has been even occasionally before the public. Such an admission would be highly disagreeable. There are impulses to change and impulses to continue. A very common reaction to such a conflict is an effort to suppress the disagreeable. In this case it would be an effort to keep out of mind every suggestion of doubt or favorable consideration of other faiths or kinds of faith. There is a determined effort to be true to the old faith,

to force a continuation of the old ways with a hope that eventually the old peace and satisfaction may be restored. It is not impossible for such an effort to be successful, but in the type of excessive militancy here under consideration it is apparent that the effort was not successful.

The mental state of a person who is making such a struggle to suppress is curiously like that of one in the first stage of the conversion process. There is an imperfect adjustment to his world, of which he is disagreeably aware. There is the awareness also of another way of thought and life which is clearly giving others such satisfaction as to make it attractive. There is the disinclination to give up the old. There is conflict between the new and better possibility on the one hand, and the old and cherished on the other.

From such a state of conflict two types of adjustment may be expected, one which is complete and adequate and one which is inadequate or makeshift, which does not resolve the conflict. The complete and adequate adjustment would be the continuation and completion of the conversion process, to give up the old and inadequate and accept that other faith and way which appeals. If such were always the solution, there would never be these annoying instances of violent militancy.

The other type of adjustment, the inadequate one, is to develop a defense mechanism in order to keep the disagreeable doubts and the attractiveness of the other faith out of mind. In choosing this one, the individual seeks relief, as did the anti-vivisectionist above, in activity so intense as to completely occupy his mind. But in the case of the religious militant the activity is not

merely that of opposition to all opposing views. There is also the effort to make all others come to his view by one means or another. The existence of these other views and the existence of people who find peace through them are a disagreeably troublesome fact in his world. The perception of them continues to stir those doubts which he is trying so hard to suppress. The only way out, as it appears to him, is to make them all like himself, like what he used to be before his doubts. Then the source of his troubles will be removed, and he will again be adjusted to his world. A patent absurdity lies in this effort to remake his own world. His activities are intense, violent, and militant because they are defense mechanisms, efforts to keep the disagreeable out of mind. Each new outburst of violence but indicates the failure of preceding attempts.

The failure of such a person to succeed in this curious effort to remake the world instead of adjusting to it may stir anger toward those whom he considers his opponents and this may lead to the development of a hate sentiment for them. Such a complication with hate would produce a condition of behavior which conforms to the definition presented above for fanaticism. And some of these people seem to have become sufficiently distorted and in such a manner as to justify that classification.

CHAPTER XV

FAITH HEALING

Disease has always been one of the most troublesome features in the world to which man is seeking to make an adjustment. The obscure nature of disease, the peculiarities of its appearance and of its disappearance, and the suffering which it produces, early led to the belief that it was due to supernatural agencies. The researches of anthropologists and archæologists reveal that the battle with disease was once so closely interwoven with religious activity as to constitute a single phase of human endeavor. In primitive society the priest and the medicine man were one. The separation of medical practice from all relationship to notions of the occult and of demon possession and of witchcraft is, in the light of human history, a very recent achievement. The separation of religious belief and practice from the problems of physical healing has never been achieved; and many devout people believe that such a separation is not desirable.¹

Faith Healing versus Divine Healing.—From the psychologist's point of view, faith healing is an occasional by-product or effect of some forms of religious experience, or of religious experience under certain peculiar circumstances. The thoughts and emotions and attitudes and beliefs and sensations and perceptions

¹ See Cutten, G. B., *Three Thousand Years of Mental Healing* (Scribners) and Rivers, W. H. R., *Medicine, Magic and Religion* (Harcourt).

and their relationships to the observable physical conditions of those who claim to have been supernaturally cured, are all obviously within the field of psychological study. But all who examine such psychological problems need to keep clearly in mind the distinction which differentiates faith healing from divine healing. Whether or not God can and does directly interfere with the physiological processes of certain individuals, for their benefit, is not a psychological problem. Perhaps all instances of faith healing are not entirely the effects upon the body of faith or prayer or of some profound religious experience. Perhaps they are those effects aided and supplemented by some direct divine or supernatural influence.² The problems of interpretation of divine healing, when and why and how, are theological problems; but any peculiar or unusual features of the religious experience which leads to healing, the nature of the changes which take place in the healing process, the condition before and after the healing are all problems for the description and analysis of the empirical sciences. If it is purely a case of healing as a direct effect of the faith state, then it comes entirely within the scope of scientific study. If it can be demonstrated that there is reason to believe in the presence of some supernatural supplement to the faith effect, then the scientist can but recognize again a limitation to his range of possible study and explanation.³

Discussions of faith healing often seem to be far

² Biblical presentations sometimes include the assumption of some effect in addition to that of faith, and sometimes not. (Mat. 9:22; Mar. 5:34; 10:52; Luke 8:48; 17:19.)

³ See Chap. 1 for a presentation of the limitations to a psychology of religion.

more concerned with the healing than with the faith which produces it. No doubt this is largely due to the spectacular nature of the healing episodes. But, negatively, it must also be due in part to the commonplaceness of faith and to the obscurity of its essential features. If faith does produce healing of the body, or even if it contributes to the healing process, then for the sake of clear understanding one must seek as full a knowledge as may be possible of the nature of faith, of its psychology and of its physiology.

Psychology of Faith.—When one looks for a clean-cut psychological presentation of the nature of faith, one is sorely disappointed. It has never been carefully studied by those competent to use the introspective methods of psychology. Attempts have been made to discover the probable nature of the faith state through the study of descriptions written by those who have had much experience with religious faith. But these are unfortunately limited in their scope. It might be most fruitful for the understanding of religious faith, if other forms of faith could be examined and presented for comparison. Faith in physicians, in engineers, in elevators, in the strengths of materials, in parents, in bankers, in drugs and even in good advice are matters of everyday experience. Yet we know relatively little of the characteristics of such faith states.

The efforts which have been made to discover the nature of the faith state, or experience, or mode of behavior, reveal a confusion with other terms which may be illuminating. There is a tendency to use faith synonymously with belief and trust and confidence and reliance. Some, however, seek to make distinctions.

The very existence of these several terms would appear to imply the probability that there are differences of quality or of intensity or of pattern, which have been vaguely recognized; and that this recognition has given rise to the use of the different terms. Belief, in the thought of some, is necessary to faith; and again it is asserted that faith has some introspectively observable effect upon belief.⁴

That faith may be thought of first of all as a characteristic attitude or set of the human organism seems to be generally recognized. But belief is also presented as an attitude. In fact, there may be two or more kinds of belief attitudes.⁵ It is thus necessary to find, if possible, some feature which will differentiate the faith attitude from those of belief. In the descriptions of it, terms are frequently used which imply action or tendencies to action. They appear far more frequently in the descriptions of faith than of belief. Ames says that faith finds its completion in action, and Leuba often speaks of faith as being a "will attitude." Pratt presents belief as an attitude of "assent to the reality of a given object,"⁶ which obviously carries little implication of action tendency. Certainly in the affairs of everyday life faith implies action rather more than belief. One may believe that a man is honest, but having

⁴ The reader may find a satisfactory introduction to these efforts through the following—Ames, E. S., *The Psychology of Religious Experience*, p. 299; Leuba, J. H., *A Psychological Study of Religion*, pp. 261–268; Leuba, J. H., "Faith," *American Journal of Religious Psychology and Education*, 1904–5, 1, 65–82.

⁵ Professor Pratt at one time presented five types of religious belief, at another three, and at still another four (*The Religious Consciousness*, footnote and references on p. 209).

⁶ *The Psychology of Religious Belief*, p. 32.

faith in a man usually connotes action depending upon that man's honesty. One may believe that it is proper to use medicine, but faith in a physician means following his advice or a willingness to do so. One may believe in the doctrine of the trinity; but faith in God implies living, doing, in addition to one's belief in the nature of God.

Thus it seems safe to assert, tentatively at least, that faith is an attitude which is characterized by a large pattern of action tendencies, of incipient movements, or of preparatory movements. Perhaps belief attitudes may at times involve some action tendencies, but they seem to be much more in evidence in the faith attitude. The faith attitude is thus more like a will attitude, in which one is aware of being just on the verge of action. And when these action tendencies of faith become overt, when they appear in the business of living, there is revealed in them the absence of conflicting tendencies. If the faith is perfect, the action tendencies are harmonious. It is only when the faith is marred by touches of fear or uncertainty that the pattern is disturbed by conflicting impulses.

Faith, however, cannot be thought of as independent of belief; often as belief may be experienced without the characteristic features of faith. One may assent to the statements of astronomers concerning the diameters of the stars, and accept the assertions as part of reality; one may likewise hear and accept the stories of arctic exploration; but these acceptances do not imply the presence of faith. They are only beliefs. And yet, faith always presupposes belief as its center, or core, or source. One may believe the financial statement of a

bank to be true without having faith in the bank; but one cannot have faith in the bank without believing what one knows about its financial status. Faith in God presupposes belief in God. Thus faith must be looked upon as an attitude which includes belief as a part of it. A faith attitude can best be thought of, then, as composed of a belief supplemented by a large pattern of action tendencies, which when completed are revealed to be harmonious.

Relation of Faith to Physiology.—As a step in approaching the relationship between faith and faith healing, it is useful to consider the nature of the physiological features normally associated with or aroused by the faith attitude. The pattern of action tendencies just described must of course be a pattern of slight muscle tensions and relaxations. Perhaps none of these are obvious, unless they appear as changes from an anxious, uncertain, hesitating attitude. When such changes can be observed, there is ample evidence that impulses to conflicting acts have disappeared. There is every indication of harmony in the faith pattern. The belief has brought an adjustment to life so satisfactory as to eliminate doubts or conflicts; and the result is an easy, facilitated onflow of the individual's life activities. Some psychologists have thought that pleasantness was aroused by such an easy unhindered undisturbed onflow. Perhaps this is the source of the pleasantness which arises so easily when faith is dominant.

But faith has often been described as an emotional experience, and just insofar as there is any emotional feature to the faith state there is an attractive possibility of relating it instructively to the now promising

physiology of emotion. If faith is purely an attitude, it could not be assumed to have emotions as essential factors. But there are many kinds of descriptions of faith states. So many, in fact, as to justify the assertion that faith states probably vary in complexity from the belief-faith attitude pattern to a joyful lovelike emotional experience developed with the faith attitude as a base. The climactic moments of intense conversions and of the ecstatic states of mystics are often described as apical moments of faith. So, too, and more important here, are the great emotional moments of faith healing experience.

It is only necessary to remind the reader who is familiar with contemporary psychology that there is an intimate relationship between the emotions and the organic functions affected by activation of the autonomic nervous system. There are three divisions of that system;—the cranial, the sympathetic and the sacral. Generally speaking it is the sympathetic, supplemented by adrenal activity and all the accompanying effects upon respiration, heart action, circulation, digestion, etc., which is involved in the production of the emergency emotional states of fear and anger and their derivatives. These check appetite and digestion, all the activities of the alimentary canal, and prepare the body for some violent muscular effort. Any chronic excitation of this sympathetic division is obviously bad for the general health of a person because of its interference with appetite and digestion.⁷

⁷ The best available introduction to this material will be found in W. B. Cannon's *Bodily Changes in Pain, Hunger, Fear and Rage*. New York, Appleton, 1915.

But the cranial division has just the opposite effect. When it is stimulated, all digestive processes are aided, the heart is quieted, the blood is moved to the internal organs, and in general there is a quiet, comfortable state of the body and the mind. In such a condition there are no disturbing excitations coming up to the brain from the body. The mental accompaniment of a physical condition dominated by the activity of the cranial division of the autonomic system is that of peace, comfort, freedom to pursue life's activities. It is the healthy state which has so long been supposed to produce the healthy mind. Obviously this is the physical accompaniment of faith. It is, at least, the accompaniment of many of the faith states, of those which are most commonly experienced. The belief state means that there are no fear or anxiety or anger arousing conflicts. The faith attitude is an enlargement of belief by the arousal of many action tendencies which facilitate the activities of life and make them more peaceful. In this pattern there is nothing to arouse the emergency emotions but much to activate the cranial division of the autonomic system, that division which contributes in so many ways to the continuation of healthy functioning in the basic vegetative physiological processes of the body.

It is further of interest to observe that the activation of the cranial division has an inhibiting effect upon the autonomic division. Hence those circumstances which establish a faith attitude are at the same time those which bring about a checking of the health disturbing fears and angers. Unfortunately the reverse is also true. There is a dissipation of the mild joyful emotional

states of the cranial division, when the sympathetic is strongly activated. Fear tends to the dissipation of the emotions which accompany faith. With intense fear the faith attitude even may be broken up.

In these physiological relationships may be found the explanation of minor forms of faith effects upon the health of believers. Every physician knows very well the value of faith in himself and his art. A large part of the battle with many patients is to establish the faith state, and to maintain it as an indispensable aid in bringing about a normal functioning of their bodies. The heart-exciting digestion-checking effects of fear are quite the opposite of what the physician desires to see in his patient. When faith is established, fear tends to disappear because those heart-governing nutrition-aiding functions of the cranial division are stimulated, and also because the thoughts which might arouse fear are less likely to come to mind. When the physician says that the recovery of a patient depends upon careful nursing, he often means that the constant poise and confidence of the nurse, her cheerful hopeful presence, will stir faith and allay fear in that patient.

Whatever one may think of the particular belief involved, it will aid the health of the patient if it stirs faith and the cranial division. The scientifically trained are inclined to smile at the "day-by-day" formula of Coué; but it must be admitted that such procedures often aid the suffering follower. No intricate theorizing about unconscious powers is necessary. It is merely that the troubled seeker of health was quieted by belief in talk about the unconscious and the power of suggestion. Fear and anxiety were allayed and faith was

established. The healing processes of nature then received a better chance than had been possible when they were hindered by the physiological effects of fear. If there is faith in the repetition of words or phrases or mottoes or scripture verses, whether the meaning is apparent or not to the one who repeats them, there may easily be some beneficial effect.

There is danger here of making a hasty and sweeping generalization. This is far from being sufficient basis for asserting that religious faith may heal organic disease. It is merely a recognition of the psychological and physiological factors involved in those instances, so often reported, wherein the establishment of faith has apparently been of aid to the sick. The quieting influences of prayer, the last rites for the dangerously ill, or even the mere presence of a clergyman, are well known. The understanding of such faith effects is a necessary background for the interpretation of more elaborate claims.

Kinds of Defects and Diseases.—The spectacular nature of faith healing reports and incidents often distracts attention from a thoughtful consideration of the nature of the diseased condition which is supposed to have been cured. Of diseased conditions there are many kinds and something of these kinds must be known if one would properly evaluate the reports of faith healings, and also if one would understand the possibilities of faith effects upon pathological states.

Of *structural abnormalities* there are many. These may be congenital or adventitious. Individuals are born and suffer all their lives with anatomical imperfections. Cleft palates, hair lips, malformations of ears and noses and arms and hands and legs and feet,—the mere men-

tion of them is sufficient to recall their existence and to bring to mind many other kinds and details. Accidents and diseases which make surgical interference necessary account for other structural defects. Arms and legs and hands and feet may be amputated, and a number of different internal organs may be excised, leaving the individual permanently maimed. If there were any possible way of making such bodies whole, their possessors would seek it aggressively.

Then there are the many *organic diseases*. Tuberculosis and cancer and diabetes and stomach ulcers and scarlet fever and typhoid fever and a vast number of other ailments, of which most people know a few, come within this group. Here there is an infection or a poisoning or something or other which causes an actual alteration of a degenerative nature in the tissues of the body. Both the course and the after effects of the disease may be painful and there is always the possibility of an organically diseased condition culminating in death.

Most readers will think at once also of the *mental diseases*, the insanities, as they are popularly termed, and the feeble-mindednesses. Of these there is a very long list of groups and within each group there are many forms which can be isolated. Some of them are accompanied by degenerations of brain tissue which have been well demonstrated. Others are either quite unaccompanied by any degenerative changes of tissue or the nature of those changes has yet to be discovered. Feeble-mindedness is supposed to be inherently or congenitally determined, in most instances, and to be incurable. These conditions have been long known. The other mental diseases, sometimes called the insanities,

have also been known for a very long time and have been through most of man's history thought of as due to demon possession. They have often figured in the reports of both faith healing and divine healing.

Lastly, there is the great group of *functional disturbances*. The popular mind knows little of these, which is not to be wondered at because the scientific world has known little of them until the present century. Their existence has long been recognized; but of their frequency and of their many forms and of their essential nature, little has been known until recent years. Technically they are referred to as psychoneurotic states. They are supposed to be caused by no infection, and they are not accompanied by any characteristic alteration of body structures. They are supposed to be disturbances of function and not of structure. In such cases the human machine has been thrown out of gear and is running imperfectly, although each individual part of the machine is still present and undamaged. Here are the phobias and the obsessions, the hysterical fits, the hysterical paralyses and contractures and tics, and, most misleading of all, the hysterical pains. So numerous are these functional or hysterical disturbances that they are a constant menace in the way of every physician. It is easy to mistake the hysterical pains for symptoms of organic disease. The forms of these psychoneurotic disturbances are legion. One great specialist says that they may resemble any kind of medical or surgical condition.⁸ Paralyzed arms and

⁸ Janet, P., *The Major Symptoms of Hysteria*, p. 12. For other interpretations and descriptions of these states, see the author's *Principles of Abnormal Psychology*, Chaps. 6-9 inc.; and Wm. McDougall's *Outline of Abnormal Psychology*, Chaps. 11-18 inc.

legs of this functional nature are well known to students of abnormal behavior; but the general public either does not know of the differences between organic and functional paralyses, or, if it is aware of them, is unable to recognize the distinctions.

Dissociative blindness and deafness, loss of the power to speak, inability to swallow food, muscle contractions which give the appearance of spinal curvature, and a host of other misleading and confusing forms appear in this group. The onset of these symptoms and symptom groups is often sudden; and, which is quite as important, they may also disappear suddenly. It should hardly be necessary to add that paralysis and blindness and deafness and all the rest of these troubles do not disappear in a moment of time when they are caused by organic degenerations.

Kinds of Diseases Cured by Faith.—With these different disease groups in mind it is well to ask what kinds of disease are reported as cured by faith. When one looks through the literature one is impressed by the scarcity of reports of cures of structural defects. Amputated legs and hands and arms are not restored. Excised organs are not healed and replaced to function normally. In the older literature mental diseases were not so well differentiated. There are many reports of the driving out of demons and some of these were doubtless mental cases. But any report of a remarkable healing of a mental case usually leaves the matter tantalizingly vague, because there are a number of other possible explanations for the clearing away of mental disease symptoms. What is termed a “remission of symptoms,” a temporary clearing up, frequently

occurs in the early stages of the dementias. Individual attacks of melancholia and mania, if uncomplicated, usually clear up in a comparatively short time of their own nature. Epileptic disturbances are individually of short duration. The cure of mental diseases seems to appear far less often in contemporary reports. Some faith healers refuse even to attempt them.

Functional diseases are rarely if ever listed as such among those cured by faith.⁹ Perhaps those who make the records are unable to distinguish between functional disturbances and organic disease symptoms. It is the functional disturbances, however, which have been most successfully treated by hypnotism, persuasion, conscious suggestion, psychoanalysis, reëducation and other psychotherapeutic procedures. Because they are functional they are responsive to those measures which are directed at functional processes. The study of these states has revealed that immediate causes are emotional conflicts, poorly inhibited impulses, and especially the distorting effects of fear. The psychotherapeutic procedures are such as to aid the sufferer to eliminate the conflicts and repressions, to adjust him better to the world in which he lives, and by such means to remove the troublesome symptoms. It would seem that a religious adjustment, resulting in a firm belief in God which expands into the more comprehensive attitude of faith, would aid enormously in the

⁹ In the once famous Emmanuel Movement the emphasis was placed directly and intelligently upon the functional diseases. This movement, however, was rather the development of a church department for psychotherapeutic work than an out-and-out faith healing episode. See *Religion and Medicine* by Worcester, McComb and Coriat (Moffat, Yard); and also *The Christian Religion as a Healing Power* by Worcester and McComb (Moffat, Yard).

elimination of conflicts and fears and repressions. The similarity between religious retreat and psychoanalytic treatment has already been pointed out.¹⁰ From that the step is not far to a recognition of similarities between all psychotherapeutic procedures and the reorganization of the individual effected by conversion, belief and the full establishment of faith.

Many scholars believe that a very large percentage of the faith cures reported occur in people who have suffered this functional form of disease. A person who has had a functional paralysis may lose the paralysis in the excitement of the faith healing procedure. The faith attitude supplemented by intense expectation and no little emotional excitement does the trick. The functional control of the limb had been dissociated from the rest of the personality organization as a consequence of an emotional conflict, repression, or some thing of that sort. In the excitement of the faith healing experience a reassociation is effected. If there are onlookers, it is possible for them all to see the paralyzed patient hobbling up on crutches or carried on a cot, and they can also see that same person walking off on his own legs. Of course the effect upon the onlookers and the person himself, if they know nothing of functional disease states, is lastingly impressive and convincing. The same may be said of muscle contractions which give the appearance of spinal curvature, of hysterical blindness and deafness, and of the many other forms of this disease.

Sometimes a persistent belief has become established which is of a nature to militate against the health of

¹⁰ Chap. XIII.

the person. Such may be as easily removed by emotional excitement as by the longer road of persuasion. In either case the effect is the same. A young man, as the consequence of reading a lot of quack literature, became firmly convinced that it was dangerous to eat protein and carbohydrate at the same meal. The effort to avoid such combinations resulted in a seriously weakened condition from the lack of proper nutrition. Whenever he did try to eat such a combination knowingly, fear was aroused which checked the activity of his alimentary canal, thus bringing on an attack of indigestion. This of course effectively reinforced his belief. Such a case might easily have been "cured" by a faith healing experience.

It is of importance also to observe that, while faith-curists often spurn medicine and medical practitioners, they manifest a most remarkable confidence in the diagnoses made, sometimes hastily, by those same medical practitioners. Even the most competent physicians admit mistakes in diagnosis.

Faith Healing Procedure.—Faith alone seems rarely to have been looked upon as sufficient to bring about a cure, and in this there is much of interest to the student of psychology. At the famous shrines, Christian and non-Christian alike, faith is supplemented by the arousal of expectation and wonder, or even awe, to a high pitch of intensity.¹¹ There is the long journey to the shrine followed by delays due to the crowded condition of the place, or because of the requirement by

¹¹ See Cutten, G. B., *Three Thousand Years of Mental Healing*; Janet, P., *Psychological Healing*, Vol. 1, Chap. 1; Walsh, J. J., *Psychotherapy*, Section 1.

the authorities of certain preparatory religious exercises,—prayers, ablutions, and other ceremonies. In contemporary faith healing meetings there is excitement and anticipation aroused by delays and preparations of many kinds, sometimes stretched out over many days.¹² When at last the patient reaches the climactic moment of contact with the healer, or steps into the sacred water, or comes before the holy relic, fatigue has weakened the powers of inhibition and the over-excited emotions incidental to the high expectation break loose and dominate, where the procedure is successful. It would be surprising if such a state of mind did not entirely displace all possibility of belief in the old obsessions and phobias. Such an intense expectation could easily culminate in the restoration of control of a dissociated function; and in the procedure there is no lack of suggestion, direct and indirect, that such is to take place. The emotions would also make the experience most overwhelmingly convincing.

After Effects.—The subsequent history of those who are said to have been cured by faith is rarely told. The reader is allowed to assume that the cure ended the trouble. Physicians, however, often tell of being called to serve these same people for the very same diseases of which they were supposed to have been cured; and undertakers are fond of telling how many of the supposedly cured later pass through their establishments. There is ample reason for believing that a very significant number come out of the faith healing experience with a belief in their cure which closely approximates the nature of a delusion or of an obsession. There must

¹² See chapter 9, section on "power" states.

also be many instances of profound disappointment, although just what the effect of such a disappointment may be can only be guessed at. And there is ample reason for thinking that the intensities of faith healing campaigns aggravate the nervous condition of many, otherwise fairly stable, into definitely abnormal forms of functioning.

It is now generally believed by students of psychopathology that the more extreme forms of hysterical disturbance, paralyses and contractures and blindness and the like, occur only in a nervously weak organism. Thus the removal of a given hysterical symptom does not cure the basic hysterical condition or weakness. Other hysterical symptoms are very likely to appear. The cure of the basic weakness is a much more difficult matter, and perhaps impossible. Not infrequently hysterical conditions appear along with organic diseases. The same is true of obsessions and phobias. Thus the removal of the disturbing symptom does not of necessity remove the weak or irritating organic condition behind it.

But in another way this addition of mental disturbances to the organic is of much greater significance. Where people go through the excitement of a faith healing campaign with the expectation of curing some hopeless condition, such as cancer, they are very likely to come out of it with a well established obsession that they have been healed. They are so dominated by the obsession that for a time they may be less disturbed by the diseased organs. Every sensory excitation from the diseased organs instead of arousing perceptions, as formerly, now stirs into activity the obsession of cure.

The almost violent intensity with which such persons assert their healed condition reveals the obsessive nature of their belief, and also that it is functioning as a defense mechanism. It is a protection against the disagreeable recognition of the fact that the diseased state persists, that the hoped for cure has failed.

Finally, it should never be overlooked that the type of life established as a consequence of the faith healing experience may be such as to aid greatly in developing a better general nervous organization. A weak organization, a weak personal synthesis, is the basis of psychoneurotic disturbances. A steady, well-ordered life may through the years greatly improve what had at first been such a weakness of synthesis. The more certain the belief, the more firmly established the faith, and the constant practice of religious exercises may in the long run accomplish more than the faith healing episode itself.

There are thus really two forms of faith healing. There is the general aid to a healthy functioning of the organism which has been described as the faith effect upon the cranial division of the autonomic nervous system, and the general effect of that upon the physiological processes of the body. The other form of faith healing, which may be aided by the first, is the hysterical symptom removal through the intense emotional excitement of the faith healing procedure, supplemented by the stabilizing effect of the new way of living set up by the memories of that experience.

CHAPTER XVI

WHEN RELIGIOUS APPEALS ARE WEAK

In recent years library shelves have been glutted with books on the church and its failures, its future, and its needed reforms. Because these topics are so much discussed by devout churchmen, they must represent some very real problem. This literature began prior to the war. During the war period, in spite of the great preoccupation with immediate needs, much thought was given to what the church would be when the war was over. Some assured the world that it was facing a great religious revival. Others seemed convinced that the men would come back from the army forever alienated from the established churches, what they stood for, and what they did. While still others, with a curious lack of consistency, wrote lamentations on the decline of the church and at the same time declared, with more fervency than expressed justification, their faith that somehow the church would survive.

The church has survived the war; and some think that the excitement over fundamentalism, the religious attacks on science, the K.K.K. movement, the rapid growth of new and somewhat lurid sects, and the like, give ample evidence of a religious revival.¹ But religious leaders are still alarmed over the more than

¹ See *The Confusion of Tongues*, by C. W. Ferguson (Doubleday Doran, 1928).

fifty-eight millions of Americans who are reported as not members of any church and are seeking earnestly to discover how best to appeal to them. Therein lies a psychological problem.

Before bringing to bear upon that problem the possible applications of the interpretations of religious behavior presented in the preceding chapters, it is necessary to bring to mind the motivations which underlie the establishment of a church organization. And it is not necessary to go into the long and involved problem of the origin of the Christian church, it is only necessary to examine the motives which appear today when a new religious organization is born. In all probability quite similar motives prevailed in the early days of the Christian church, but with those we need not now be concerned.

The Original Motivations of a Church.—New churches, when they appear today, are composed largely of people who secede from some other church. At least there is a core or nucleus of such. Some new preacher or some new book stirs a new and vivid religious experience in the lives of a sufficient number of people to be influential. This group may all be in one of the older churches or they may be scattered through many. The first point of significance, however, is that they have what appears to them to be a new religious experience.

The novelty of the experience, which indicates that their former church connection was failing to appeal to them or to satisfy them, leads readily to the conviction that this experience of theirs is something unique, something which the unaffected members of the older

churches have never had. And as it is the tendency of the human mind to seek explanations for its experiences, a certain amount of rationalizing is pretty likely to follow, although this beginning of a new theological development does not at first proceed much farther than the grasping of a few ideas which can be later elaborated after the first flush of emotional excitement subsides.

These new ideas, which are the basis for a new doctrine or belief, constitute a third significant aspect of the development of the new movement. These people believe that they have not only had a new and unique religious experience, but they believe also that there is some doctrine to the truth of which their new experience is adequate testimony. It may be faith healing. They may believe that they have been healed as a part of their experience and that this constitutes a new or long neglected truth about God and his relation to man. Or it may be some doctrine about the day of the week which should be set aside for purposes of worship. Or it may be some doctrine about the immediacy of the end of the world and the best means of preparing for that event. Whatever the doctrine caught upon and stressed, it is thought to be related in some intimate fashion to this new and unique religious experience; and, whether accurately or not, it is looked upon as a doctrine not held, or one sinfully neglected, by the established churches of the time.

The fourth phase of the motivation for the new organization grows out of the effect of the preceding three. It is the desire of those who have had the new experience and have accepted the new belief to be much together, and to separate themselves from those who

have not. This is fundamentally based upon that characteristic of human nature which McDougall has called active sympathy. It is that human trait which finds expression in the act of seeking to arouse in others the same feeling we ourselves are experiencing, and then, through observing in others the success of our efforts, enjoying an augmentation of our own emotion. The latter phase is the better known passive sympathy. The person who discovers a beautiful sunset turns to it thrilled with pleasure, but does not normally seek to enjoy it alone. The next impulse is to exclaim and to call the attention of any other available human beings to that same sunset. If we are angry, we do not ordinarily seek to keep it to ourselves but proceed forthwith to tell others of the abuse in order to make others angry about the same thing. If we succeed in this effort to arouse like feelings or emotions in others, we then see them giving expression to the same emotion and the perception further stimulates our own emotions or feelings. So these people who have the new religious experience and the new belief seek to stir feelings in others which are like their own. They want to talk about it over and over again. But it is only those who have had a similar experience whose feelings can be similarly aroused with any degree of facility. The other members of the established churches are indifferent; they have never had the experience; they do not fully understand and they may heartily disapprove, which sets up a negative attitude, a further barrier against their responding sympathetically. Hence it is necessary for these people of the new experience to be much with each other.

This alone might be sufficient reason for their withdrawal and the organization of a new group. But other social and economic features usually arise to supplement. Either the new group or the old is most certain to become dissatisfied with the preaching, according to whether the pastor in charge favors the new or the old. Differences arise also over the problems of teaching in the Sunday School. And these in turn lead to difficulties over the control of the management of the church, the election of officers and the disbursement of funds. All of these conditions but serve to reinforce the desire of the new group to flock by itself.

Motives for the Continuation of a Church.—After a church organization is established and has been in operation for any considerable number of years, as most of those which complain about the present problem of the church and its future have been, there are many motives which operate for the continuation of that church and its special emphases. It is easy for some outside critics to point out the failures of the church and to marvel at the struggles which are endured in the effort to keep alive churches of different denominations where one would, on a purely business basis, be sufficient. Recommendations for reorganization and for consolidation often appear to be made without consideration of those motives which operate to keep each particular organization alive at no matter what cost.

First of all, it must be evident that, so long as there are loyal members, any particular church must be serving to meet the religious needs of those who are loyal. Its order of worship, the particular pattern of religious appeals favored, is such as to effectually arouse

in these persons the religious experience desired. Their life problems are aided by their church experiences. Their world adjustments are renewed and maintained. Secondly, the loyalty of these people may and often is reinforced by a belief in the divine nature of the church which they support. The truth of this is quite apart from the present question. It is here of importance only that the loyal are often supported by, or stimulated to, their loyalty by this belief. And usually there will be found a more or less well established belief in the presence of some special virtue attaching to the peculiar beliefs of the church, or in its special form of organization and government, possibly in both. It may be a belief in some particular doctrine concerning the deity, or concerning the mode of baptism, or the day of the week which should be observed for religious purposes, or the government by bishops and the frequent change of pastors, or the democratic independence of each church as a unit, or what not. Whatever the particular belief, the effect of unquestioning belief in it adds to the conviction that it must be maintained and defended, which can of course be best done through the group organization.

All human efforts at propagation turn early to the training of the next generation. Health movements and patriotic movements and social reform movements and cultural movements are all alike in this consciousness of the necessity of bringing up the next generation in the way it should go, from the point of view of course of the particular movement involved. The same tendency is manifest in religious movements. One of the best means for the maintenance and defense of a faith is to see that

the next generation is trained to that way of thinking. Hence the emphasis placed upon some form of religious education. However crude its methods may be the effort and desire is actively present and this, the consciousness of the responsibility for the religious education of the next generation, soon supplements the preceding motives for the maintenance of each particular religious organization or church.

It is inevitable that, with the lapse of time, the fervency engendered by the initial experiences of a new religious movement should subside. And, if the movement continues through a number of generations, there may be among many of its members at any given time a considerable lack of fervency for the particular doctrines which once were so ardently believed. But another factor here enters in to aid in the maintenance of the organization. This is the belief that the church as an institution is indispensable to the moral welfare of the community. Many individuals may be comparatively indifferent to the religious appeal of the church services and may themselves be present but infrequently, still they support with their contributions and with their presence when necessary in order that the community may have the moral influence of the church. They prefer to bring up their children in a community that enjoys a churchly atmosphere rather than in one which does not.

Where the emphasis upon the importance of some special belief has been reduced by time and distance from the initiating experiences, and even where there has come to be a recognition that there is no important or essential difference between some churches and

some others, there still operate certain motives to keep them apart. Human nature finds comfort in the familiar, especially in times of stress. The psychoanalysts have made much of what they term the "instinct for the familiar" which they find manifest where there is a conflict between the individual's desires and the environment. The tendency then is to run back home for protection, back to the familiar. It is always pleasant to return to familiar surroundings after journeying abroad. Adjustments are easy, in part because few are called for, where habits are well established and in the environment which contributed most to the formation of these habits. While it is most doubtful if there be any instinctive basis for this, the fact is generally accepted that we find comfort and relaxation in a return to situations where our established habits of life are adequate. Where the habits are adequate, we have the feeling of familiarity or "at-home-ness." It requires no very extensive observation nor special skill in analysis to discover that many of the loyal members of a church, the "old stand-bys," are loyal because of the habits which have been established. They are at home and at ease in the familiar environment. And it must be ever kept in mind that the outstanding function of the religious experience is to make the individual feel at home in his world. The familiarity of the church environment and the familiar order of worship, the familiar pattern of religious appeals, may contribute no inconsiderable mite to the achievement of that orientation. Doubtless this motive is often concealed. The individuals so motivated may dislike to admit that such is their motivation for maintaining a church when,

in terms of efficiency and good business, consolidation with another would be wise. Then other reasons are actively sought and offered in defense.

Lastly one must not fail to recognize that the many experiences with a given church, its building, its members, its teachings, its organizations, its history and its traditions contribute rapidly to the establishment in its members of a love sentiment for that church. The many joyful experiences achieved through that church and its activities contribute to the love sentiment. If sorrow has come into a home and the church has aided in bringing comfort, the experience adds much to the love sentiment. The man or woman in love is notoriously irrational in conduct. In such a state of mind conduct is motivated by feeling rather than by the dry light of reason. So, too, in the matters of church affection. Reason may dictate the abandonment of a church, or some very great reorganization of its customs, or its consolidation with another church, but the love for that church and its ways, established through the many years of joys and sorrows associated with it, is a serious obstacle in the path of those who are activated by the principles of efficiency management alone.

Church Decline.—With these motivations for the establishment and the maintenance of church organizations and orders of worship well in mind, one may turn to a consideration of the failures so often reported and which have given so many students of religious problems so much concern. It will be necessary to rule out of this discussion all economic and purely sociological causes. This must be done not with any im-

plication of criticism, but because this is a consideration of the psychological factors involved. Churches do decline because of economic conditions and because of changes in residential centers, and, more recently, because of changes in means of transportation. But the effect of these is not such as to change the fundamental nature of the human being. The basic nature of religion and the function of the religious experience remain the same. Changes in human desires and changes in human conceptions do come with social change and these may profoundly affect the power of churches to appeal or to satisfy, and these are psychological problems. It must further be recognized that in any given case no one of the following reasons will, in all probability, be adequate. Most instances are too complicated for that. But for purposes of presentation and for systematic use in the diagnosis of any given situation they must be presented as separate items.

Admiration in Place of Religion.—While the function, it will be remembered, of a church order of worship is to produce a religious experience, it is quite possible that orders of worship may so degenerate, or, with the best of intentions, be so altered as to produce an experience of admiration and not one of religion. The experience of admiration is enjoyed, but so are concerts and movies and museums and landscapes and dances and new automobiles. Just because an experience is enjoyable is no reason for assuming that it brings consolation, orientation and adjustment. The latter is the function of the religious experience. It will be further recalled that the instinct-emotion patterns aroused by the religious sentiment are wonder, inferiority, fear, and

the tender emotion. Admiration can best be thought of as a temporary combination or fusion of wonder and inferiority. The great painting or the magnificent sunset holds the attention, stimulating wonder and the characteristic effort to sense more of it, but at the same time it also stirs the feeling of inferiority. Both of these are parts of the religious experience and therefore it is easy for an order of worship to be so altered as to stimulate the admiration portion of the religious experience and to stimulate that alone.

Churches which substitute moving picture shows and concerts for an order of worship may by so doing draw attendance, but they are producing admiration in their attendants and not religious experience. Ritualistic services are subject also to this danger. The attendant who should be a worshiper, according to the conception of those who conduct the order of worship, may be merely enjoying the beauty of the ceremony, of the music, of the architecture, of the stained glass windows, and all. Here the difficulty seems to lie in the fact that the ritualistic service presupposes active participation and some preparation on the part of the worshiper. If this active coöperation is omitted, and the attendant comes and remains passively submitting to the effect of the light and sound and color and movement, he is most likely to experience only admiration. Churches may of course be able to maintain themselves for some time, perhaps for some considerable time, by this arousal of admiration, especially if number of attendants is counted as successful maintenance. But it is not long before such efforts must compete with commercialized offerings of entertainment. Many church

advertisements indicate, through the items they emphasize, that they are more or less consciously competing with the theaters and concert halls. Experiences of admiration, of mere enjoyment of the attractive and the beautiful, however, give little help with the serious problems of life except as they may divert attention for the time being. A genuine experience of religion does give new courage, new purpose, and new insight. A church may entertain more easily than it can produce a religious experience, but if it prefers to entertain it must expect its religiously unsatisfied attendants to be readily attracted elsewhere by better entertainments, and to be easily drawn away when some new religious movement in the community does bring them the religious satisfaction which entertainments cannot give.

Social Experience in Place of Religion.—After much observation, the writer is also convinced that a very large number of people continue to attend church because of the social experiences enjoyed there and not because of any religious experience. These social experiences may be psychologically more like the religious than they are like that of admiration; but they lack one most essential feature, the consciousness of the presence of God. Only the most tentative attempts have been made toward the analysis and description of a social experience, and there are doubtless many widely differing varieties of it; but certain features of its nature seem fairly certain. Among the many sentiments which develop in every individual, there is the self regarding sentiment, or that sentiment which develops as a consequence of the many experiences with the individual's own concept of himself. McDougall suggests that the

instinct-emotion patterns most frequently aroused by this sentiment are positive self feeling (elation) and negative self feeling (inferiority). It seems evident also that our social experiences are often such as to stir anger and fear. Slightings and insults, or even the anticipation of them, would doubtless stir anger and fear as well as the more definitely self regarding emotions.

The social situations of life may through the self regarding sentiment be very satisfying, if they are such as to make the individual think well of himself; or they may be very annoying, if they make the individual think badly of himself; or yet again they may stir the wrath of the individual because of the apparent failure of others to approve and to recognize his worth. Then, too, the social experiences of life may satisfy that desire for companionship which has in the past been unfortunately termed the gang or herd instinct. Human contacts are a very large part of that world to which every individual is seeking adaptation and in which every individual is trying to feel at home. The achievement of membership in a group of human beings who have common interests and who are, at least on the surface, interested in the welfare of each other aids greatly in the achievement of that feeling of at-homeness.

Many churches have recognized this social feature and use it more or less deliberately as a means to self maintenance, perhaps also as an aid in their evangelistic programs. There is much effort devoted to the welcoming of each other and especially of those who appear to be strangers. Everyone is urged to "feel at home." Churches which do not so emphasize the social aspect are caustically condemned as cold and irreligious. But

it is more significant to observe the behavior of individual attendants. They will be seen to do much handshaking; there is obviously the greeting of friends not seen for a long time; there are comments on the appearance of good health (exalting the self) and expressions of sympathy for those in poor health or in trouble (comfort in fellowship); groups gather eagerly for conversation; remarks on the clothing worn are not infrequent (telling a lady how handsome her hat is adds to her exaltation); and then, too, the service itself is often designed to emphasize fellowship. The preacher conducts it as though he intended that all should have a good time together. There is much vigorous "congregational singing." The student of psychology will recognize at once that the singing of familiar tunes has been used again and again in a great variety of ways to develop the feeling of fellowship.

While people may enjoy the heightened self regard which comes from such contacts and events, and while there may be much consolation through the feeling of fellowship established, it must not be forgotten that the religious experience is one of adjustment to a world which involves all of the problems of life. The problems of whence and whither, of immortality, of death, of sorrow and suffering, and of adjustment to a world in which these problems are ever present is not achieved by social experience. Only a religious experience which involves the consciousness of God can achieve that. The social experience is but palliative and temporary. It may be better than the experience of admiration, but it is yet far from religion. People whose church contacts are for social satisfactions only are those who will be

easily drawn away by any movement which provides a genuine religious experience. And where the seeking of social experience is the only motivation for church attendance, the church must again compete with other organizations. Bridge parties and dancing clubs, lodges and luncheons, clubs and literary societies can supply the social experience quite as well and perhaps better than the church. Church losses may in many instances be attributable to reliance upon the social appeal, when other organizations can better satisfy the social needs of the public.

Intellectual Experience in Place of Religion.—It is probably safe to assert that there is what might be called an intellectual experience. It is that experience we have while hearing or reading that which supplies new ideas or stimulates our thinking to new interpretations. As a rule such an experience is pleasurable. It may also involve the self concept and the self regarding sentiment. Just how complicated it is and just what the nature of its factors may be is not here of so much importance as the recognition of the existence of such an experience which differs in certain features from the religious experience. That the religious experience may in many persons be aroused by what has been called the intellectual or cognitive form of appeal has already been presented. But here we are concerned with the fact that the order or worship, designed presumably to arouse the religious experience, may be so distorted as to arouse a merely intellectual experience. Herein obviously lies the danger of over-emphasis upon the intellectual appeal. Where the sermon is allowed to become a lecture on economics or sociology or psychology,

the experience produced is far less likely to be religious. And, while discussions of philosophy and theology may be used to arouse the religious experience in those responsive to the intellectual appeal, the presentation of those subjects can be easily made in such a manner as to produce no religious effect. As in the two instances already discussed, failure to arouse the religious experience soon makes it necessary to compete with other agencies offering similar or better presentations. A church so failing must expect to lose its followers when some movement brings religion into their lives.

Effect of Personality Differences.—In the examination of any particular instance of apparent failure or weakness in a church or in its order of worship, one must not fail to examine into the nature of the appeals used and the nature of the people whom the church would serve. The significant fact of individual differences in relative responsiveness to esthetic and conduct and intellectual appeals has already been amply presented in another connection;² but these individual differences may be even much greater and more complicated. A missionary³ of many years experience in India is arguing stoutly that the orders of worship and the customs of American and European churches are the outgrowth of American and European personalities and for that very reason fail to satisfy the Oriental.

The psychology of this is easy to understand in its general principles. It has long been known that the reactions of the Occidental and the Oriental are so different as to make it exceedingly difficult for the one

² See Chap. 7.

³ E. Stanley Jones in his book, *The Christ of the Indian Road*.

to fully sympathize with and to understand the other. The religious experiences of the two would thus find expression through personality organizations so different as to result in very different art and thought and conduct. While these religious expressions of the Oriental might quite effectively be used in turn for religious purposes with the Oriental they would fail with many if not most Occidentals. And the reverse seems to be equally true. The effort to engraft the New England variety of Protestant church upon entirely different human backgrounds has failed lamentably. Today missionary statesmen are saying that, while other peoples may accept the life and teachings of Jesus, they must not be expected to establish the same forms of organization and of religious practice that have grown up in Europe and America. If there is truth in the charge that European-American Christianity has developed customs to which its founder would be unresponsive, then it is possible that other peoples may understand Jesus better than they can respond to established Christianity.

Other failures may be due to differences which, although less remote, may be interpretable in terms of the same principle. There has been much discussion for many years of the relation of the church to the laboring man, with many frank admissions of the failure of the church to appeal effectively to that class. There is in all this a certain amount of absurdity because it is well known that certain kinds of religious organizations include in their active membership a very large number from the so-called laboring classes. The Salvation Army and the Roman Catholic church among others have

not been without success in attracting and holding where other churches have failed. During the war, pastors of churches for the more refined of the population went out as chaplains or enlisted for regular service and discovered that underneath the roughness of many men there was the same need for religious experience to which they had been accustomed. But they also observed very clearly that the churches to which they ministered could not, unless very greatly changed, make any lasting appeal to such men. And if their churches were sufficiently altered to meet the needs of such men they would no longer satisfy their present membership.⁴ Here again is the problem of difference in personality organization. The men to whom a particular church does not appeal are men whose mental organizations are such as to make them unresponsive to the practices of that particular church.

In this connection it may be illuminating to call attention to a similar situation in the world of art. Some music appeals to a very large number of people because it is the expression of an experience which all have had. Other music appeals to a few only because it is the expression of experience which only the few have had or can have. Likewise some paintings appeal to all because they appeal to a response pattern present in most of mankind. Other paintings appeal to few because they are designed to arouse a response pattern to be found in few people. There are likewise in religion certain fundamental problems and modes of response

⁴ See the very sound and insightful discussion of this in the pamphlet by A. Herbert Gray entitled *As Tommy Sees Us*. London, Arnold, 1919. Pp. 118.

present in most of mankind, and there are also many other problems and modes of response which develop in certain groups. Religious customs which are the outgrowth of these specialized groups must not be expected to appeal to all.

Lack of Active Participation.—In some instances the failure of a given religious organization may be due to a failure to properly emphasize activity in worship. In the preceding paragraphs and in the discussions of such subjects generally, the burden of the discussion is upon the appeal. Just at the close of the great war there was a conference of prominent church men in this country on the new problems confronting them, and their emphasis seemed to be very largely upon the nature of their preaching, what appeal they should make to their people. There was much less emphasis apparently upon what the worshiper does or must do in order to obtain the satisfactions of religion. This fact that there may be participation in religious worship either in a passive or in an active manner is of great importance. Some churches seem to ignore the possibility of active participation by the worshiper and throw their entire dependence upon the appeal of the order of worship and the sermon. Other churches assume a very considerable amount of coöperation through the active preparation and participation of the worshiper. Obviously it is much easier to arouse the desired religious experience where people actively assist than where they passively wait for it in case the music and the sermon are sufficiently moving.

Evangelistic methods have assumed a passivity on the part of those for whom they were designed, if not

even a wholly negative attitude. While the evangelistic fervor has subsided in recent years, its after effect is still to be observed in the assumption, conscious or unconscious, that worshipers are passive auditors who must be stimulated into religious fervor. There is an accompanying decline of family worship and probably of private prayers. Just as responsibility for the training of children is being more and more shifted to the public school, so responsibility for the cultivation of the religious life is being shifted to the church as an institution. Perhaps the churches in which this problem arises are in part to blame for the failure to maintain the consciousness of religious duty in the minds of its members.

It is possible also that the reverse of the above may in some instances be discovered, that there may be an excessive emphasis upon duty, or too great reliance placed upon the consciousness of duty. While such a condition may be infrequent, if not rare, nevertheless the student of human affairs must have in mind all possibilities in order to discover the causes in any given case. The danger of placing too much emphasis upon duty and obligation lies in the possibility of religious practices becoming merely meaningless customs and as such be easily discarded. Prayers that are said as a matter of obligation, for the magic effect of the utterance of the words, are prone to lose even an accompanying consciousness of magical influence. Then they could equally well be uttered by a phonograph and save the human being so much time. Or, they could be stuck on a prayer wheel and rotated by a hired attendant. It may be properly contended that the whole duty in such instances is not being discharged, and that

is probably true. If the whole duty were being discharged, there would be with the prayer an active meditation and a consciousness of the actuality of God, if not of the presence of God, and some consideration of the ways of life and of the individual worshiper. Human beings are, however, prone to distraction. If life for a time is easy and peaceful and successful, if there is little to arouse the problems of adjustment, an individual may become so absorbed in the affairs of this world as to make him neglect his religion. Then if duty holds him still to certain religious practices they may become perfunctory.

Lack of Consciousness of God.—There is a poorly authenticated assertion that religion prospers in times of economic and social distress and that religion declines in periods of prosperity. The truth of this is difficult to establish or to deny. Figures on church membership and the dollars invested give little indication of the frequency and intensity of the religious consciousness. But it may be safely assumed for purposes of analysis that religion is stimulated by distress and that there is less stimulation for it in times of prosperity. Certainly that is true in the lives of many individuals. That men who never prayed before do so in a life and death situation has become traditional. What appears to happen with changes in the vicissitudes of living is a change in the frequency of the consciousness of God.

Most people live through each day with the frequently recurrent consciousness of their business or vocational or professional responsibilities. Most people likewise have during each day many experiences of the consciousness of their domestic problems. And also

with most people there is an inconveniently frequent recurrence of the consciousness of financial problems. The consciousness of social problems is also often present. Conscious life is for most people pretty largely composed of a succession of these states. Consciousness of the actuality of God and of man's conduct in relation thereto is comparatively infrequent. The frequency of the consciousness of God may vary greatly, from those individuals who experience it but once or twice in a life time, as perhaps at mother's knee and again when facing death, to those saints who live with the consciousness of God as the most frequent experience of their daily life.

This does not necessarily mean the consciousness of the presence of God, an experience which many very devout men and women seem unable to achieve, but rather the consciousness of living in a divinely patterned world in which there are certain preferred ways of living discovered through religious insight. Frequency of this experience makes a spiritually-minded man; infrequency or the total absence of it makes a worldly-minded man. It is the purpose of religious exercises to bring the consciousness of God into the life of the worshiper. The church which neglects the cultivation of the practice of religious exercises, especially those other than attendance at Sunday worship, may fail because its people are more conscious of everything else in life than they are of God. And, while life goes smoothly for them there is little to provoke consciousness of those great problems which can only be solved through religion. If the Sunday exercises are such as to produce only social and intellectual and

esthetic experiences, then the chief means for the production of the consciousness of God has failed. When there comes again a time of stress and a real need, such people are quite likely to seek elsewhere.

Church Failure and Opportunity for Expression.—There is the theory that churches fail for the lack of opportunity for expression. In this there is undoubtedly no little truth, but it has been unfortunately much distorted by bad psychology and by prejudice. During the first decade of the present century there was an active emphasis upon social welfare work as a necessary aspect of Christianity. Much printers' ink and pulpit oratory was expended upon this movement and much very excellent work done. Out of it seems to have come this theory, that churches fail for the lack of adequate opportunity for expression of the religious emotion. This is not infrequently reinforced by quotations from William James on the importance of expression to prevent good impulses evaporating into nothingness; or the reflex arc psychology is invoked to convince of the necessity of completing the process in order that the religious experience may be of any value.

The psychological defense is in substance sound. The defect of the argument lies in the assumption too often made that the form of the expression of religious experience must be in social welfare work. Excellent as club rooms and gymnasia and health programs and social settlements and cooking schools and the propagation of child hygiene and the like all are, it is nevertheless a mistake to suppose that social welfare activities are the only possible form of religious expression. A genuine religious experience must inevitably affect the

conduct which follows. Such is of the very nature of the religious experience. And if it is frequently repeated then it must profoundly alter the ways of living. But the nature of that conduct effect, the expression of the experience, if that language is preferred, depends upon the nature of the particular individual involved. Some will find the effect or the expression in the reorganization of their own domestic and social lives; others will find the effect or expression in the alteration of their business or professional methods; yet others will find the expression in music, verse, painting or other form of art. Undoubtedly there will be those at almost any period or time whose education, interests and temperament are such as to cause the religious effect upon their lives to be that of seeking to improve the living conditions of others. During the early years of the present century the social setting was such as to produce many instances of this social improvement impulse. Where one individual might find much comfort and satisfaction in devoutly providing flowers for the altar each week; another would feel such a task too puerile or childish or effeminate because his personality is very differently organized. Social welfare work might satisfy him far better. If churches fail in the matter of religious expression, that failure must be attributed not to a failure to do social service work, unless all the members be of that variety, which is most improbable; but to a failure to adapt the opportunities for activity to the nature of each individual.

In this connection it should be further observed that much of the social welfare work which is undertaken as the direct effect of religious experience, and much of

it is far from being such, is undertaken in order that the individuals doing it may find it easier to lead a religious life according to their standards of what that life is; or else it is in the hope of making it easier for others to enjoy religion and to lead a religious life. Where housing conditions, wage problems, and other aspects of labor problems, and the conflicts between labor and capital are such as to make it difficult for employers to achieve the adjustment which is essential to the religious experience, then they are likely to seek to improve those conditions. Religion may bring such comfort and joy into the lives of some that they seek to bring the same comfort and joy into the lives of others. In the course of these efforts they may find that housing conditions and wage problems are an ever present obstacle. The tenderness feature, the brotherhood impulse, stimulates the effort to improve these conditions. Here again will be found social welfare work which is the direct outgrowth of religious experience.

Religious Appeals Outgrown.—Some radical reformers are contending that religious customs and practices and teachings of today belong to another time, that they have been far outgrown, that society has so far progressed as to make man unresponsive and out of touch with the old ways of thought and worship, that these changes and the unprogressiveness of religious people are responsible for the so-called "collapse of the churches."⁵ According to the psychological principles here presented, this argument might contain some truth. It has been urged that the religious appeals used

⁵ See for example the opening chapters of *New Churches for Old*, by John Haynes Holmes. New York, Dodd, 1922. Pp. xv, 341.

are in very large part first the expressions of the religious experience. Of course the expressions must be in terms of the forms of thought and expression available at the time. So it is true that the Bible is phrased in terms of thought and custom and figure of speech of many hundreds of years ago. The creeds were likewise phrased long before the days of modern science, before the circumnavigation of the globe, before evolution, before Einstein. The art of the church is Roman, Italian, Gothic. The heroes of the faith most talked of lived in the first few centuries of the Christian era. Since those days forms of thought have changed, science has made bewildering progress, social customs are in many respects very different, a new industrial epoch has evolved. And as a consequence the framework through which man gives expression to or formulation of his inner life must be very different from that of the men and women who made the religious appeals used by the churches said to be in a state of "collapse." The obvious conclusion must be that new appeals are to be found and new ways discovered which are consonant with the lives of men today.

But before accepting this as an adequate explanation one must at least be certain that the churches are failing as conspicuously as is alleged. That there are individual churches in a state of decline due to the movement of populations, to the advent of the automobile, and to other economic and social changes no one can doubt; but these lend no support to sweeping charges of church decline. The Eucharistic congresses with their thousands of attendants indicate that certain very old customs still have a powerful appeal. Within recent

years, the vigor of fundamentalism and rapid rise of the "light-house temple" variety of church, in which the religious language used is very ancient, are yet other indications that old appeals are still effective. Evangelistic campaigns preaching the "old time religion" continue to draw their crowds.

On the other hand there are the thousands of unchurched; but more significant still are the many who talk about the failure of the church. Many of these do so with a greater or less degree of regret, and this frequently if followed up will be found to reveal an early religious training and early religious habits from which there has been a departure. Education and reading and study, occupation with modernistic ways of thinking and living, have so changed them as to make them no longer responsive to religious appeals effective in their younger days. There must be among the unchurched many also who have grown up with little or no religious training, who have enjoyed some considerable degree of education, who have acquired modern ways of thinking and doing. Such would not be responsive to many of the older religious appeals. So there is doubtless much of truth in the assertion that church failures are often due to the use of appeals which have been outgrown. It is like the difference between the Occidental and the Oriental. We have living today in the same occidental cities people whose personality organizations are such that they are responsive to very old religious appeals, and people whose personality organizations are such as to make them quite unresponsive to the ancient appeals. For the latter group new ways must undoubtedly be designed.

Still the argument must be accepted with no little caution. The old must not be too hastily cast aside lest much of value be lost. Religious appeals or expressions, from whichever point of view they be considered, are comparable to artistic expressions. Some artistic expressions are admittedly of but temporary value. Books that were motivated by much fervor often have for a time a wide sale and high esteem, but in a few years they are forgotten. Examples of the same ephemerality in verse, painting, statuary, music, and architecture can be readily found. They are short-lived because the emotion expressed is of the time and not characteristic of all time and of all mankind. And they are often short-lived because of the inadequacy of their expression, the crudeness of it. So one great test of art is its durability. The same criterion is applicable to religious expressions. Some are ephemeral and many such have already been forgotten. Others are passing. But there are religious expressions, religious appeals, which have lived for a very long time and will continue to live because they are adequate expressions of the basic features of the religious experience, an experience it will be recalled which is motivated by the fundamental drives and conflicts of human existence. When these people who are unresponsive, who are alleged to have outgrown the established religions, confront some tragic problem of adjustment, one which makes life even in their world a perplexity, they are likely to find their satisfaction in religious forms of no very recent production.

The Church and New Institutions.—There is finally the tantalizing possibility, could we but see the present

in the light of thousands of years, that we are in the process of evolving new forms of religious organization. Perhaps the churches as we know them today may in the course of generations pass and in that same course of generations other forms evolve. But we lack the vision to see through the thousands of years. The awakening Orient is doing many things and thinking many things which seem to be new to them and which have long been thought basic in Christianity. Perhaps they are in the process of developing new religious forms. In occidental countries innumerable organizations are now doing what was once thought to be the function of the specially religious. The Red Cross, the education of the young, local charities, moral leadership, protection of human life, care of orphans, and care of the sick enlist the activities of many who are not active members of any church. Such activities are conceived to be an essential part of good citizenship. And through such some people seem to find a sort of religious satisfaction. There is also the rapid and widespread development of the "service clubs" as they are called, Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions, and a host of others. These are thought by many to be essentially religious in nature, as many lodges are more obviously so.

Whether or not these movements and developments indicate the early stages of what may some day take the place of the older church organizations, it is possible to detect certain motivations for them of a more immediate nature. It must be recalled that the ideal religious life is one lived with the almost constant consciousness of God, a life in which all adjustments and duties and activities are carried out with that con-

sciousness. Such a life would be lived in an almost continuous state of that nature enjoyed by most people for brief periods only, at the conclusion of each new religious experience. The aim of a complete program of religious exercises must be to approximate that ideal as closely as possible. Consequently such programs include not only regular participation in weekly formal orders of worship, but also the use of other religious exercises daily or even more often.

Many, very many, people today do not carry out anything like so complete a program of religious exercise. The complexities and problems and temptations and distractions of life are many and great. The readjusting effect of church worship comes but once a week, or even less often. Hence the feeling of isolation, of battling alone against great odds. The need for adjustment to each individual's universe becomes an active urge. And this it will be recalled was fundamental in the origin and development of religion. Today it is quite evidently receiving a partial satisfaction through the frequent meetings of organizations stoutly emphasizing brotherhood, fellowship and service to each other.

The rapid rise of the luncheon or service clubs and the nature of their emphases indicate this motivation. An examination of the song books and the literature of Rotary International and of Kiwanis reveal many expressions of brotherhood, good-fellowship, hand-shaking, cordiality, smiles, good cheer. Service to each other and loyalty to the community and to the country are also stressed. Then, too, the song books contain many old time songs ("Dixie," "Annie Laurie," "Old Black

Joe," etc.) the words of which can be of no particular significance to the membership in these clubs, they may even be somewhat inappropriate; but they are obviously included and sung because of the spirit of fellowship which is so easily aroused by the community singing of tunes easily learned and followed. It is the fellowship not the words which are valued.

An organization or a social movement may be promoted and kept alive for a time by astute propaganda, but it cannot be kept alive long and actively by such means. The history and status of the service clubs indicates that they are not artificial, but that they are satisfying a need in the lives of the membership. From the emphases and practices of these organizations, that need must be the orientation and comfort of fellowship. This is, in other terms, an adjustment to one considerable portion of the human contacts of life. It is an adjustment to that part of a man's world of which he is most keenly conscious during business hours. But, valuable as that is, it cannot be accepted as a complete adjustment to the entirety of a man's world, and this it would have to be to justify classification among religious movements.

In an interesting and suggestive study of the hymns in a large church hymnal, Coe ⁶ found very few hymns of action, and lamented this as a serious defect. His thought was that the church gave an experience which must be carried out into the struggles of everyday life. For this reason Coe argued that there should be more hymns of action for church use. But the place for the hymns of action is not in the church worship where

⁶ For another aspect of this study of hymns see Chap. 10.

the reorientation process is going on. The place for hymns of action is during the week when men are in action. It is then that the service club does its work with its emphasis upon comradeship and good will. It has its songs of action, although of doubtless a rather different nature from what Coe had in mind. It is in the contacts of everyday life that the orientation achieved in the religious worship of the weekly service is lost. The daily religious exercises of the orthodox Jew, of the Roman Catholic, and of the Protestant should serve to maintain that orientation or adjustment if properly carried out. But this is not done by large numbers of people, and many more do not profit by the church worship as an exercise, even though they are present. Hence the development of these other aids to adjustment partial though they be.

While in the course of time the church as it is today may undergo great change or even pass entirely, the nature of the altered church or of whatever takes the place of the church must be something far more than a merely social institution. Friendship, fellowship, community loyalty, patriotism, international feeling, and the like, excellent as they are, cannot, no matter how institutionalized, do for mankind what religion does. Whatever may take the place of the church as it is today must, so long as man falls short of omniscience, be that which will aid in adjusting him to the whole of his world. It must be something which is religious, which involves belief in God and recurrence of religious experience.

CHAPTER XVII

GROWTH CHANGES IN RELIGIOUS BEHAVIOR: CHILDHOOD BACKGROUNDS

The assertion that the mind of the child is not that of a miniature adult has been made so often that people are at last coming to believe it and to think of the child as psychologically different. On the whole this is well. But in accepting such assertions about the mind of the child it is necessary not to forget that the term mind is a very inclusive one. There may be individual mental processes in the mind of the child or even whole states of mind which are identical in all discoverable features with the same processes or states in the mind of an adult. A sensation of warmth or the discomfort of a stomach ache is a matter of warmth or stomach ache whether it happen in the child or in the adult. The fear engendered in the child by the flash of lightning and the crash of thunder may be identical in every feature with the fear aroused by the same thunderstorm in the mother of the child. But the interpretations which the child would give to warmth and stomach ache and thunderstorms would be very different from the interpretations of the same experiences in the mind of an adult. It is the mind of the child which differs from the adult and not individual processes or states. It is well to keep this distinction especially clear when thinking of religion in relation to different periods of life.

Identity of Religious Experience.—The religious experience in all of its fundamental features is the same whether it occur in the child, in the youth, or in the aged. The emotional factors involved, the consciousness of God and of a new adjustment are essentially the same. It may be safely assumed that there is no greater difference between the child and the adult in the nature of their religious experiences than there is between different adults or between different children. But the mind in which the experience takes place may be vastly different. The concept of God which develops in the mind of a child may be very far from what is in the mind of a youth and likewise from that of an adult. The ways in which the religious experience finds satisfactory expression in the life of the child may be very different from the expressions of youth and of maturity. The religious appeals which are effective in arousing religious experience in the child may be quite other than those which are effective in the youth and in the adult. It is not the religious experience itself which is different, but the modes of expression and of arousal and the concepts and percepts of which the child is capable. It comes back again to the oft asserted fact that the world of an individual changes with age and experience. And this world of the individual is dependent both upon the degree of intelligence and the range of experience.

The religious adjustments then, it must be recognized, occur in settings which are psychologically very different. It may occur in the mind of the Chinaman, of the Hindu, of the Eskimo, of the Nordic (if there be such a race), of the citizen who has spent his life entirely within New York City or San Francisco or

Gopher Prairie. The religious experience may occur in the childhood, the youth, the mature years, and the old age of all or any of these. The differences between adults, assuming this to mean the middle years or that period between the achievement of full maturity and the onset of senescence, have already been presented in their relationship to religious experience. It is the purpose of this and the following chapter to bring into consideration the fundamental principles of mental growth and decline and the bearing which they may have upon the relationships of religion to the different periods of life.

Sentiment Differences.—It is necessary to recall first that the infant certainly comes into the world without any of those organizations or patterns we now term sentiments. There may be some instincts which are innately determined patterns; but, whether or not there be such, the appearance of sentiments is wholly dependent upon experience with individual objects and with individual concepts. The religious sentiment is thus a matter of development. But it is more important to recognize that the course of growth from infancy to maturity is notably a period in which many other sentiments are in process of formation and alteration, Sentiments of the home, the parents, school, sports, studies, teachers, friends, places of occupation and employment, of self in all its changing phases, and a host of others are developed at one time or another and all undergo innumerable changes. The presence or absence of these and the degree of their development as well as their form at any given time in the life of an individual determine the valuations which that individual places

upon different features of life. Hence his world is peculiar to himself, for it is scarcely conceivable that any other individual has exactly the same pattern of sentiments.

In terms of sentiment differences alone, there is an impressive possibility of a vast difference between the worlds of the child and of the youth and of the mature man or woman, and of many degrees of difference in the course of development from infancy to maturity. How these sentiments change in the declining years of life we know little; but we know enough to recognize that some of them function less prominently, and this alone would make old age distinctively different from the middle years of life.

Groundwork of Interpretation.—It is often pointed out, secondly, that the interpretations placed upon sensations and images are dependent upon the past. What a man has experienced conditions his interpretation of the new. The child calls the orange a ball; the man calls the first aëroplane a flying machine. But psychologists have learned that the backgrounds of perception and of memory, those traces of the past which continue to be so influential in behavior, cannot be thought of as remaining associated only in the manner of their original experience. Memories of a similar nature become organized into constellations. The traveller soon discovers that his hotel memories are linked together, his museum visitations fall into an associated group, cathedrals into another, and so on. In everyday life what we read and think about politics forms one constellation of memories, our business happenings another, our religious contacts another, and so

on. It is these organizations of memories which form the groundwork of our interpretations of the new. One may not be conscious of the details of the entire background, in fact one is not usually aware in any given instance of more than a very small part of it, nevertheless it is the constellation which is functioning as a rule rather than any single memory.

Obviously no individual is born with these constellations of memories. They are the products of living in contact with a world. The infant does not have them. The child is gradually acquiring a few of them, while others develop in later years. The school boy has no college constellation yet, nor has he any very influential constellation from experiences with physics or biology or metaphysics or theology. Those come later. Growth is thus in one very significant phase a matter of the acquisition of constellations of memories which influence perceptions and judgments and through them the emotional reactions. At any period of life the number and nature and content of these constellations will be different from practically any other period. Hence what a person at any age thinks about evolution, the Bible, church membership, moral conduct, immortality, almost any subject in fact, will be conditioned by his own peculiar constellations.

Rise of Intelligence.—To these it is necessary to add, thirdly, the now well-known fact that with growth there is a progressive rise in what is called intelligence. Much as psychologists may differ in their definition of just what the term intelligence is to designate, the fact remains that something called intelligence improves in a fairly constant manner up to somewhere in the early

or middle teens. Hence at any time from birth up to the maximum of intelligence development the individual's reactions and interpretations are conditioned not only by his sentiment patterns and his constellations of memories, but also by his intelligence at that time. Interpretations are inevitably made in terms of what the individual knows; but the efficiency or the keenness of these interpretations depends also upon the intelligence of the individual.¹

The application of this to religious behavior is most significant. Take any considerable group of children, say fifty or more, all of the same age in years and it will be soon apparent that some are satisfied with explanations which do not satisfy others. In such a group there are some from homes which have encouraged a wide range of reading, where the conversations have contributed much to the knowledge of the child, where there has been much opportunity for the broadening effects of travel, and there will also be children from homes where there is little encouragement to read, where conversations contribute little and where there has been little opportunity for travel. Add to these differences the differences in intelligence, in the ability to use and to profit by the experiences of life, and it soon becomes plainly evident that the world for one child may be vastly different from the world of another child of exactly the same age. If it be accepted that religious experience is fundamentally one of adjustment

¹ That the selection of biblical material for presentation to children should be made in terms of the child's degree of ability to understand has been well determined experimentally in the study of S. P. Franklin entitled *Measurement of the Comprehension Difficulty of the Precepts and Parables of Jesus* (University of Iowa, 1928).

to the individual's world, then it is clear that the conceptual features of that experience, the ideas of religion involved, cannot be uniform. Religious expressions must come through different organizations in different children, and the appeals to religious experience must operate through a different organization in one child from that which functions in another. Even more is this true of children of different ages, and while intelligence may reach its maximum by the middle of adolescence, growth in wisdom may continue long after. There may be an increase in knowledge for a long time after intelligence as a tool has become sharp as it ever will. These increases in knowledge may produce profound differences in the world for each particular individual in spite of apparent equalities of intelligence.

The Child's World.—In a most ingenious manner Professor Koffka,² has recently called attention to a peculiarity of child life which has a significant bearing upon the present problem. This may be considered as the fourth general feature of development. He has pointed out that the child lives in more than one world and that objects may be shifted from one to another with a consequent shift of their meaning. There is for the child a world of the child and a world of the adult, and possibly others. A stick of wood in the world of the child may be a much beloved doll, while in the world of the adult it may be but a stick of wood for fuel purposes. When the child is dominated by that organization or pattern of interpretation called the world of the child, the stick of wood is reacted to emotionally and interpreted in terms of that world; but, at some other

² Koffka, Kurt, *The Growth of the Mind*, Chap. 6.

time, the child may be dominated by that very different pattern of emotional reaction and interpretation called the world of the adult and the presence of the same stick will then be treated in a very different manner. These inconsistencies of reaction often puzzle the adult who has achieved a single world of organization.

Koffka then seems to think of development as appearing first in at least two large patterns, that of the child and that of the adult. Sometimes the child thinks and feels in terms of the one and sometimes in terms of the other. Gradually, however, the worlds become synthesized into one large pattern which retains the more valuable features of each. Children who have not long since achieved this synthesis describe their earlier experience as that of the child within and the child without. The child within may even be given a different and a secret name ³ while the child without is known by the name adults have given to it.

This brings powerful support to the assertion, so often made here, that the world of the child and the world of the youth and the world of the adult are far from being the same worlds. Now it appears that the child may have two or even more worlds. Perhaps there are adults who still live in more than one world, adults who have never achieved that unification which Koffka presents as the normal course of development. If there are such, it will make their interpretation just so much more complicated, and the possibility of such a condition may prove to be the most satisfactory way of explaining the remarkable inconsistencies of some people.

³ For a most notable presentation of this see Hunt, Una A., *Una Mary*. New York, Scribners, 1914. Pp. 268.

Changing World Centers.—In this connection it is important to observe also that there may be very significant differences in what for convenience may be termed a person's world center. In ancient times the world even for very learned adults centered in the earth; while today, few learned adults would say that the world of their conception centered there. Knowledge has shifted so far as our system is concerned from a geocentric to a heliocentric conception. But the most learned adult, the greatest physicist or astronomer or what not, who would scorn the suggestion that his world centers in the earth, certainly did not always have that conception. His world center has changed with the years.

Our knowledge of shifts in the world center of the growing individual has been none too well developed, but some studies give us clues as to certain of the changes. The large place of the parent in the life of the young child has been stressed not only by the older genetic psychologists but also by the psychoanalysts, and more recently by the Gestalt school. So it may be safe to assume that in early childhood the world center, for at least one of the child's worlds, is in one or both of the parents. The ideals of the child come from them. The child's early vocational ambitions are to duplicate the vocations of the parents. Later there is a shift of world center. The ideals are then no longer from the parents. Contacts outside the home become more and more influential. There may be a breaking-away from parental domination and a greater influence of others upon the individual, but the real center of the individual has become himself. This period of self centered de-

velopment, in which the world revolves around the self, is followed by a further change which brings the world of the individual to center more and more in the lives of others, the family or the community or the commonwealth. Some may even achieve a life in which God becomes the center of the individual's world. Here again is revealed a wealth of possibilities in individual difference, possibilities which must always be kept in mind especially in the effort to interpret the religious behavior of any given person.

Changing Concepts.—Intimately related to all of the foregoing is the fact that concepts undergo many changes in the course of individual growth. This must be looked upon as the fifth general principle of growth change important in religious behavior. A concept, it will be recalled, grows out of perceptual experience. After many perceptual experiences with horses one develops the concept of a horse. One may have a concept of some particular horse as the consequence of many experiences with a particular horse; and one may have a concept of horse in general without reference to any one in particular, although the concept is the product of experiences with particular horses. The difference lies in the meaning, and this possibility of difference in meaning is the reason for including the topic here.

Concepts may be designated by the same word or described in the same language and still not be alike. One person may have a concept of George Washington the meaning of which has grown out of childhood story books, a little school study of history, and some Fourth-of-July orations. Another may also have a concept which he refers to as his concept of George Washington,

and yet the meaning be very different because he has been reading the newer biographies. The auditory perception of the sound of the words George and Washington uttered successively will arouse the George Washington concept in the minds of each of these two persons and unless some analysis is undertaken it might be supposed that the concepts are alike. It was this fact of the great difference in concepts designated by the same word which led Socrates to place so much emphasis upon the definition of terms. Only by the definition of terms is it possible to discover if two people are talking about the same thing.

With the growth in experience and consequent knowledge the meanings of concepts undergo many changes, although the same words may continue in use. The child's concept designated by the word moon may be that of a very pretty bright object, possibly made of cheese, not very far beyond the reach, something over which certain especially athletic cows sometimes jump. With the passing of the years these childish meanings are discarded, all eventually go except the brightness. Gradually the term moon comes to designate a large body, vastly beyond human reach, illuminated by light from the sun, which is cold and barren and with whatever further meanings may have been acquired through reading and study. These changes do not as a rule take place suddenly but come slowly as newer information is acquired. And in adults, the concept of the moon will be found to vary notably from individual to individual. In some the concept has very little meaning while in others the concept of the moon is rich with meaning, because it happens to have been a topic of

special interest to them. Likewise, the concept of evolution undergoes many changes, from the possible notion that our not far distant ancestors were monkeys to that of the most scholarly of contemporary biologists. The concept of one's self undergoes vast and complicated changes. What the child thinks of himself, what the school boy thinks, what the youth, and adult and the centenarian think must all be very different because of the vast difference of experience and of imagination. Concepts of religious topics, it will be found, undergo like changes. One cannot thus fully understand the world of any individual until one knows the meanings of his concepts, and the meanings of his religious concepts are certain to be limited by the world in which he is living.

With these principles of development in mind the reader is prepared to consider them in definite relationship to the problems of religious development. These are not to be sure all of the principles and facts of mental growth, far from it, but they will prove sufficient for present purposes. They are the principles of mental development which are most serviceable in the interpretation of changes in religious growth.

Genetic studies of religious behavior usually begin with a discussion of the religious status of the newborn infant. But discussions of original sin, the effect of baptism, acts of grace and the like are not psychological subjects as the field of scientific psychology is delimited today. The nature of the soul of the infant, its relationship to God, the plan of salvation, and the functioning of sacraments belong to theology not to empirical psychology. Older studies, and some even of the more

recent ones, always made mention of the religious instinct as one of the important features of the native endowment; but the preceding discussions have led to the conclusion that there is no religious instinct.

Infancy and Religious Experience.—Neither can it be said that the infant is capable of a religious experience. There are no concepts. There is no world with which to come into conflict, which cannot be understood, to which adjustment in terms of a consciousness of God may be made. The infant may very early be capable of fear reactions and quite early manifest what might be called tenderness; and it is not long before the infant gives evidence of something approximating wonder, but inferiority requires yet much development. Thus it is clear that the infant cannot have a religious experience. Religious sentiments are likewise out of the question. The infant's degree of intelligence is so near to zero that it is not yet measurable. But all this is far from saying that the infant is not a proper subject for theological consideration. The capacity for religious experience as conceived by the psychologist may be lacking, but the infant may quite possibly have a soul. The psychological and the theological points of view are supplementary, not antagonistic.

With the appearance of language, and possibly a little before, concepts also appear. By the time later infancy or early childhood is reached, by the age of four or five years, there are many concepts and the child has begun to use a considerable number of religious terms. The child may speak freely of God and the angels and of Jesus and use yet other terms. The intelligence is growing, the range of perception is expand-

ing, sentiments are developing: the child is beginning to have a world of its own, although that may not yet be integrated into one world scheme. The possibility of a world within which conflicts and troubles of many sorts may arise is rapidly appearing. But it is after all a very simple world, and the troubles which arise therein are usually solved by running to father or mother for protection and soothing.

Childish concepts of God and of other religious topics have attracted the attention of some. They are very crude. God may be thought of as a gray-bearded old man a little more powerful than the child's father. He may be seated behind a desk or He may be on a throne with angels flitting hither and thither. Else Roloff tells of children using blocks to represent simultaneously Jesus, the Savior, The Christ-child, and the Guest.⁴ But the details of these childish concepts are in themselves of little significance. As a whole, they indicate the very limited nature of the concepts of early childhood: that the child may speak of God but that the adult must not be misled into thinking that the child means anything closely approximating the adult's conception, unless perchance the adult be very childish. Through the years these religious concepts, along with other concepts, will undergo much alteration and expansion of meaning, but at the outset the young child is no more capable of comprehending the nature of religion than it is of having a religious experience.

⁴ For a more detailed presentation see Pratt's *The Religious Consciousness*, Chap. 5. One of the more accessible of these studies is Barnes, Earl, "The Theological Life of a California Child." *Pedagogical Seminary* 1892, 2, 442-448. See also Roloff, Else, "Vom religiösen Leben der Kinder," *Archiv für Religionspsychologie*, 1921, 2-3, 190-197.

Relation of Drives to Religious Development.—In the analysis of religious experience and religious development here presented, much has been made of the fundamental human drives as the background of it all. There was the drive for power or superiority, the drive for continuance of comfortable living and the drive for sexual satisfaction. In a crude fashion, the first two of these appear very early; by the time the child is running about and talking they are plainly evident. But the appearance of the sex drive is a matter of debate. The earlier genetic studies assumed that the individual prior to puberty was a sexless creature; but since the emphases, and the extravagances, of the psychoanalysts there is an ever growing tendency to recognize that sex differentiations appear much earlier than puberty. Perhaps these are entirely the influence of environmental factors. Perhaps the little boy is boyish because he is expected to be, and the girl is girlish because of expectations; and perhaps a genuine sexual influence does not appear until puberty. But there is a growing tendency to think that sex differences are determined from within, through little known physiological processes which slowly become definite and manifest. In the latter case the sex drive must also appear gradually, but unlike the others is later in becoming fully definitized. Whether the influences come from within or from without, by later childhood all three drives are evident in some form. The will to power is in full conflict with the wills of others; the desire for the continuation of comfortable living is manifest in many rebellions against immediate necessities; and the sex drive, although not definite, appears in many questions and partially repressed curiosities.

All this means that the social situation is becoming more and more complex, more and more difficult. The world of the child is rapidly expanding and at the same time integrating into a whole with which the child is often at odds. To the experienced adult these troubles of the child seem petty in the extreme. There are disappointments over minor matters, conflicts with school and home regulations, difficulties with playmates and neighbors. The child is becoming an individual with a world centering in itself; but, unfortunately for the child's continued happiness, the world does not conform to its desires. Here obviously is the basis for that which in later years may become a religious experience.

The question may quite properly be raised concerning the earliest age at which a genuinely religious experience is possible; but it is a question which no one can answer positively. The infant obviously could not have it; but by later childhood there is a sufficient development of intelligence and of emotions, and a sufficiently well organized notion of a world order with knowledge enough for appropriate, although necessarily simple, conceptions of God and of a better way of living. At what age the first religious experience occurs is a matter of minor significance because there must doubtless be very great individual differences. And it is not necessary to assume that the first religious experience shall be of such shattering intensity that the individual can thereafter always recall the hour and the moment. In fact, it is more often quite otherwise, especially where there is even a modicum of religious training. Most people recall their childhood as a period in which there was a simple notion of God as far back as their memories go.

Credulity of Childhood.—Much has been made of the credulity of the child in religious matters.⁵ The grotesque nature of their religious concepts often startles adults and they marvel at the childish credulity as they call it. But this is scarcely the same form of behavior as that of the adult who has the capacity to criticize and yet uncritically accepts the trash represented to be revelations from the spirit world, who believes advertisers' stories of the medicinal values of quack medicines, or who is easily agitated by the dubious stories retailed by gossips. Credulity in the adult and credulity in early childhood are not quite comparable because of the difference in the psychological setting. To be sure there is in each the uncritical acceptance of that which is patently fantastic, but it must be remembered that the child is unable to think otherwise. Not only is its intelligence at a very early and simple stage of development, but also its range of knowledge is so extremely limited that even though it had the intelligence it would lack the knowledge with which to criticize. Fantastic concepts must then be expected of the child because they fit the child's world. A modernistic theological concept of God would be conspicuously out of place.

Starbuck also reports⁶ that his returns indicated a certain externality of religion for many children. His respondents said that during childhood religious concepts and customs were accepted and practiced, but that there was nothing very personal or intimate about

⁵ See Starbuck, E. D., *The Psychology of Religion*, Chap. 15; and also Hall, G. S., *Adolescence*, Vol. 2, p. 315 et seq.

⁶ Starbuck, E. D., *Psychology of Religion*, p. 194.

them, that they were always somehow "outside." These descriptions were made by people, without much psychological training, attempting to recall their childhood and to describe it as best they could. How pervasive this characteristic may be among children is not known, so little has it been studied; but it may very likely be the experience of a considerable majority. It reminds one at once of the description by Koffka of the adult world and the child world between which the child oscillates. (If the religious concepts and practices were for the child but things of the adult world, then in later years, especially if an intimate experience of religion intervened, the person might very naturally describe his childhood experience of religion as being peculiarly external.

It is necessary further to observe that the experiences of children in a religious environment are not necessarily religious. Far from it. Many of them are undoubtedly social. Children may often sing songs, recite scriptural passages, or take part in some religious pageant or drama presented by their Sunday school and do so in a wholly unreligious manner. Their delight in being the center of attention, in wearing their best clothes or some special costume, their pleasure in being selected for some specially distinctive part in preference to others,—these features alone are sufficient to reveal the unreligious nature of the experience. Such have their value as factors in the development of the self and in the establishment of habits of social adjustment, but they must not be mistaken for religion. On the other hand they may be of great assistance in the process of religious instruction, and thus make an invaluable

contribution to the subsequent religious life of those individuals.

It must now be evident that the plan of religious activities for children should be upon a very different basis from that used for adults. The mental organization of the child probably differs more from that of the adult than even those who are studying the problem constantly are able to comprehend. The few similarities between the child and the adult attract attention because they are items which can be readily understood. The rest is largely incomprehensible. The concepts are different and the capacity for understanding the concepts of others is different. The pattern of sentiments and the degree of their development is different. The interests are different and the problems of life are different. And, because of the very great difference of organization, those appeals, presented at length in other chapters, must have very different values in the life of the child.⁷

⁷ The reader is advised to consult also the presentation of growth changes as outlined by E. S. Ames in his *Psychology of Religious Experience*, Part III, Chaps. 11, 12, 13, 14.

CHAPTER XVIII

GROWTH CHANGES IN RELIGIOUS BEHAVIOR: RELIGIOUS EDUCATIONAL PRINCIPLES, ADOLESCENT PROBLEMS

From the point of view of the psychology of religion, there must be *three purposes involved in any adequate program of religious education*. There must first of all be the aim to produce in each individual a genuine religious experience, and to reproduce it with whatever frequency is necessary to the establishment of a religious sentiment. That there will be differences of shading in the religious experience produced and differences in the pattern of the sentiment established, because of the preferences and emphases of different religious groups or cults, must be freely admitted. It is the nature of the fundamental process with which the psychologist is concerned.

Religious education must, secondly, supply the child with religious concepts, with religious information. And this instruction must be adapted to the world in which the child is living. In other words, the instruction must be such as to fit into the life of the child and not be merely memoriter work on phrases which belong to the adult world. Furthermore, as the child grows and its world changes with the accompanying changes in intelligence and range of knowledge, the instruction must aid in the expansion and correction of these con-

cepts. Without such progressive instruction, growth will bring the individual up into those vastly different worlds of youth and maturity with only the religious concepts of childhood. Such are not likely to serve their intended purpose when carried over into the different worlds of later years.

The child must, thirdly, be taught how to live the kind of life best suited to the particular form of religion in which it is being trained. Here is the contact with ethics. The child must be given stories, examples, maxims concerning that way of living; and simple problems of conduct in a child world must be discussed in the language of that world, under the guidance of course of those principles of living which are in the background of the mind of the teacher.

Use of Religious Appeals.—The establishment of the religious sentiment obviously depends upon the successful production of the religious experience. This can be done only through the utilization of religious appeals. It is necessary then to consider their relation to the mental status of a child. It soon becomes clear that the intellectual appeals must be largely discarded because of the child's limited intellectual development. Information must be given, to be sure, but the mere presentation of ideas, concepts, and interpretations of the problems of life is not likely to do more than establish the necessary concepts for a religious experience. Because of the lack of that religious sentiment through which the intellectual appeal is effective for the adult, it cannot be expected to effect a like response in the child. The great theologico-philosophical concepts which might actively stir the religious sentiment, and hence

the religious experience, in some kinds of adults would be certain to fail even though presented in simple language.

When instruction has supplied the child with a simple concept of God, one that is appropriate to the child world, and when notions of an approved form of conduct have been established (say, the Golden Rule for example), it then remains to arouse those thoughts and emotions which are characteristic of the religious experience. Perhaps this may be done by the direct act of God, the Holy Spirit, or the production of the experience may be aided by such supernatural means; but it is not customary for those active in the affairs of religious education to sit back and wait for such an intervention. Rather is it assumed that every earthly agency should be used to prepare the individual for the influence of such acts of grace. It is thus necessary to arouse, in connection with thoughts of God and the better way of living, the emotions of wonder, inferiority, fear and tenderness.¹ In more general terms it means that the worshipful experience must be produced in the child and that what is here being discussed is the application of the psychology of religion and the psychology of the child to the arrangement of an order of worship for children.

Of a few features or applications it is already possible to be fairly certain. The arousal of wonder and inferiority emotions (the fusion of which is admiration) cannot easily be achieved in a church basement with a few

¹ Some would here add awe, reverence, etc.; but it will be recalled that in preceding chapters these were presented as combinations or fusions of two or more of the fundamental emotion qualities.

tawdry decorations and a wheezy reed organ, even though the children do sing "I want to be an angel" with much gusto. The consciousness of the presence of God is greatly aided by more appropriate settings. Hartshorne² has well described the effectiveness of a most dignified and artistic environment and of the finest music in producing the worshipful experience in children. He quite properly did not attempt to have the worship in the room familiar to the children as a place for study and discussion, but used a special place for the purpose. Those appeals which have elsewhere been presented as the esthetic appeals (music, ritual, architecture, etc.,) are effective stimuli to the arousal of wonder and inferiority emotions. Consequently they should be generously used with children.

But the esthetic appeal may fail utterly with children if it is not accompanied by such a mental preparation as to make the child feel that all this ceremony is not just something very pretty, but that it is associated with the presence of God. And, because the child's attention wanders easily, there must be frequently in the order of worship items which will guide the thought of the child. They must occur frequently because little active coöperation can be assumed or expected. Voluntary attention is not sufficiently well developed. Childish attention is largely of the passive variety, and easily drawn from one thing to another. Items in the order of worship must be brief, and all language clearly uttered and well within the comprehension of the child, unless mental preparation has been especially

² Hartshorne, H., *Worship in the Sunday School*. New York, Teachers College, 1913. Pp. 210.

well established. This means then that, while beauty and dignity and ceremony are of great value, expensive architecture is not indispensable. Even the tawdry church basement could be used effectively if the very special nature of the arrangements and the ceremony and the preparation and the guidance of thought during the ceremony were such as to arouse the consciousness of the presence of God.

The other emotions and the giving up of old ways and acceptance of the better, the resolutions for the future and the tenderness emphasis may all be aroused by the inclusion of proper items in the order of worship. Doubtless they may not all be aroused the first time a child goes through the experience, nor perhaps in many subsequent times; but the plan for the order of worship must take all these features into consideration in order that the whole experience may eventually be produced. In substance the order of worship for children should be much like that for the adult, but the length of the items, their nature and their content must be adapted to the mind of the child.

Instruction for Changing Religious Concepts.—The second aim of religious instruction presented above requires but one amplification here. It was indicated that the instruction should be such as to aid in the correction and expansion of the meaning in religious concepts as the child progresses up through youth into maturity. Failure to do this seems to be the cause for those periods of doubt about which so much was written at one time. As the earlier genetic psychologists, dominated by the recapitulation theory, were much given to seeking some certain period when each trait of develop-

ment came to its maximum, so there was an effort to discover a certain period of doubt. But that period was never well located. Starbuck seemed to think of it as essentially an adolescent phenomenon, but his distribution of age frequencies³ indicates many reporting disturbance by religious doubts at eleven and twelve years. There is no well defined mode in his curve. Hall seemed at times to think of doubt as a characteristic of later adolescence and yet wrote of doubts in later childhood.⁴ That many individuals experience periods, sometimes prolonged over many years, of disturbing doubts concerning religious beliefs no one would be foolish enough to deny. Sometimes these experiences have been so severe as to end in suicide. Examination of them reveals that childish concepts have been carried over into later years where the higher degree of intelligence and the expansion of knowledge reveals their absurdities.

But such persons also assume that the particular meanings which prevail in these religious concepts carried over from childhood are the correct and only possible meanings for them. The inevitable consequence in their thinking is that these concepts must be rejected. And to many of them this means the abandonment of religion. Some do this easily, but many have come to believe that religion is something so profoundly indispensable that they are torn by conflict. Not infrequently the intensity of the emotional experience is complicated by fear of their parents' reactions to their changes of belief. It is to avoid such tragedies that the program of religious education must provide for the

³ Starbuck, E. D., *Psychology of Religion*, p. 239.

⁴ Hall, G. S., *Adolescence*, Vol. 2, p. 315 et seq.

change and amplification of meanings in the religious concepts. It cannot be expected that childish ideas of religious subjects will be any more efficient in maturity than are childish notions in other fields of thought and belief. Concepts of anatomy and physiology acquired in early childhood through the best explanations parents and teachers are able to provide must inevitably undergo much alteration with progress in knowledge of the world and of anatomical and physiological studies. The same must be true of religious thought.⁵

Place of Conversion in Adolescence.—Adolescence has for many years been the period upon which the greatest amount of psychological interest in religion has been focussed. The earlier students of religious behavior were quite naturally attracted by the most conspicuous. James in his famous *Varieties of Religious Experience* was most concerned with the unusual in the religious life. Perhaps there has been no more pervasively conspicuous phenomenon than that of conversion. The statistical tables for age distribution indicated that the curve rose to its greatest height somewhere about the middle of adolescence.⁶ For a time there was a tendency, also influenced by the recapitulation theory, to think that this curve represented a norm which every developing mind might be expected to approximate.

In recent years the tendency is to think of conversion more and more as a product of bad training, or the lack of proper training, which permitted the in-

⁵ For an excellent examination of the available programs for religious instruction see Betts, George H., *The Curriculum of Religious Education*. (Abingdon Press.)

⁶ See Chap. 8.

dividual to grow into ambitions and ways of conduct so opposed to the standards of society as to necessitate a readjustment of a very disturbing nature. That there were two groups of people, those who experienced a sudden conversion and those who were converted by a prolonged and inconspicuous process, was early recognized,⁷ but the latter type at first attracted much less attention. More recently Coe⁸ has been advocating that the conversion phenomenon should be largely unnecessary if religious education were adequate. With the latter position the present argument is largely in accord, if the term conversion be accepted to mean a religious experience intensified by the necessity for a profound reorganization of the individual's way of living. It is quite possible, however, that the first genuine religious experience may not in many cases be achieved until late in childhood, or even until after puberty, that it may be so impressive as to be long remembered, and that it may be this first religious experience which is recalled and described when information is called for about conversion. Such experiences might be far better described as times of "enlightenment."

Whatever the degree of the intensity of the experience, whether it be that of worship or of enlightenment or of conversion, the nature of adolescence as a stage of mental growth is such as to make religious experience both easy and difficult. The many trends producing conflicts and maladjustments lay ample

⁷ Starbuck, E. D., *Psychology of Religion*, Chap. 24.

⁸ Coe, G. A., *A Social Theory of Religious Education*, Chap. 23; and also E. T. Clark's *The Psychology of Religious Awakening*.

basis for much religious experience on the one hand; while on the other the marked development of awareness of individual capacities, the broadening of knowledge, and the course of reconstruction of religious concepts form the basis for much religious indifference.

Influence of the Sex Drive.—The rôle of the sex drive in adolescence is an important one. With pubescence this drive has become definitized. But society demands restraint for a number of years. This in itself presents a conflict of no mean dimension. Students of abnormalities of behavior are finding many troubles that are directly traceable to it. And it is well to observe that this conflict appears to be between drives within the individual himself. The will to power drive is now manifesting itself in ambitions for professional and social success, the achievement of which necessitates a certain type of conduct, and this type of conduct means the repression of the sex drive. The immediate satisfaction of the sex drive would likewise conflict with the standards through which the desire for the continuation of comfortable living finds expression. New ideals, new desires, new hopes, new standards, new ambitions have been developing rapidly. The world in which the youth lives changes rapidly during the years between puberty and early maturity. All this the sex drive complicates sorely.⁹ This contrast between the ideals of the youth and the impulses of the sex drive make notions of inferiority and of sinfulness easily aroused. Evangelists have long made generous use of this in their methods

⁹ For excellent presentation of this complication of the social situation by sex development and sex consciousness see H. L. Hollingworth's *Mental Growth and Decline*, Chap. 12.

for producing the consciousness of sin and through this the conversion experience.

This active influence of sex in the life of youth, and the fact that it occurs during those years when religion was supposed to be most easily aroused because of innate determination, has led some psychologists to believe that there was a close relationship between sexual behavior and religious behavior.¹⁰ It was argued that love must be evolved out of the sex drive and that the love of God was derived from romantic love. Whatever may have been the genetic order in racial development, and this proposal is very dubious, certainly such an order is frequently violated in the development of the individual. The relationship between sex and religion is far more frequently one of conflict and the means of relief than it is one of genetic derivation. The sex drive is a fertile source of conflicts in life, an active stimulator of fundamental questions beyond the capacity of most youths to solve. The religious experience brings a way of viewing the world and its problems, new courage and a plan of life, in essence it brings a new adjustment.

Influence of Will to Power Drive.—The will to power drive is manifest in many significant ways in adolescent years. Youth feels the thrill of physical vigor. The prospect of soon being self supporting grows steadily. Vocational plans and possibilities are rife. The consciousness of self has been achieved and is now being supplemented by an awareness of individual capacity. That this is often exaggerated is but another indication of the consciousness of capacity and the push

¹⁰ See Chap. 8.

for its realization. Economic independence is in process of establishment. Parental domination is on the wane. Youth is beginning to be self-reliant and responsible to society and not to the parents alone. Necessary as it is for the student of religious behavior to recognize this drive and the roseate dreams of youth, it is equally necessary to recognize that the capacity for satisfying the demands of this tremendous urge for power and achievement is subjected to a wide range of individual differences through social and economic limitations. The aspirations of youth are often in pitiful conflict with a miserable reality.

It must further be kept in mind that what is termed intelligence reaches its maximal development in adolescence. The capacity for interpretation, learning, adjustment, and problem solving in its elemental features comes to its maturity. Knowledge, that indispensable supplement to the effective use of intelligence, is also expanding by leaps and bounds; but for the needs of life it is yet much too limited in scope. The dreams and ambitions of youth are far beyond the knowledge of youth. Many concepts are still decidedly childish. These are to undergo much alteration and many new concepts are to be acquired. The young man's concept of the life of a physician, a lawyer, a real estate agent, a bond salesman or what not, may be very crude. The young woman's concept of the life of a teacher, of a social worker, of the career of the business woman, of the demands of domestic life, may be far from the truth. All these are yet to suffer much alteration and expansion. These changes are prone to bring disappointments and distresses which frequently produce a

somber background for the superficial gaiety and non-chalance of youth.

Influence of Comfortable Living Drive.—The drive for the continuation of comfortable living is manifest of course in the ordinary ways of seeking health and nutrition and the comfort of loved ones; but for the vigorous healthy youth this drive is relatively subordinate because its satisfaction is so easily achieved. Sometimes this drive seems to be the dominant feature in the lives of certain adolescents. Ambitions, dreams, the future are apparently shoved aside for the sake of present pleasure. The problems of life are ignored or avoided in the easiest way possible. Extremes of this sort give some basis for the claim that youth is “jazz mad,” although they are far from being generally characteristic.

The world for the adolescent has become so complicated and is changing so rapidly, and the adolescent himself is so full of contradictions and growth changes, it is not to be wondered at if religious experience sometimes becomes most perfect in these years. It is not that all adolescents are much given to religion and to church worship, but that where religious experience occurs in youth it has all the typical features well brought out. The many conflicts and difficulties of life for the adolescent make frequent adjustments to his world imperative. This is no doubt the reason for the great number of conversions reported in adolescent years.

Is Youth Irreligious?—The alleged irreligiousness of adolescence has recently been stressed rather more than the indications of the statistical studies of conversion

frequency. Perhaps this is in part enhanced by the failure to discover the influence of the supposed religious instinct alleged to be especially active or sensitive about the middle of adolescence. Perhaps also this disappointment of expectations, falsely built upon an instinct doctrine, has led to much misinterpretation of the behavior of youth. Because religion is not manifested in certain conventional ways the conclusion is not justified that youth is therefore irreligious. It is a problem which cries for further analysis and much careful investigation. Some suggestions in the light of contemporary psychology are, however, possible.¹¹

Because there is such a vast range of individual differences among adolescents, due to age and intelligence and social and economic and domestic conditions, the problem may best be grasped by considering the two extremes: First, the youth of superior ability and opportunity; and secondly, the youth of lesser ability and less favored by opportunity. Between these extremes the many degrees of difference may be fitted roughly.

The superior group has a high intelligence; the home life has been such as to aid in their education; they have had the advantages of regular school work in good schools and are in high school or college with the prospect of as much formal education as they seek; they have been early introduced into the ways of polite society and at an early age are at ease in formal evening clothes and are familiar with those conventions of society called good manners. Their health is vigorous;

¹¹ See Kupky, O., *The Religious Development of Adolescence*. New York, Macmillan, 1928. Pp. 138.

their parents have achieved; and they entertain few doubts of their own capacity to succeed likewise. The achievement of self reliance comes easily for there is an awareness of much upon which to rely; and the parents are wise enough to cultivate such independence of mind. Such youth quite naturally feel that they "have the world by the tail" or that they very soon will have. The consciousness of power to solve the problems of life by their own efforts is tremendous, and there is a peculiar tendency to assume the sufficiency of their own solutions. Feelings of inferiority no doubt appear but they rarely expand into emotions which overwhelm. Obstacles are confronted of course but the conquest of them is part of the game of life.

Young people so endowed and with such advantages, in such a state of mind, are pretty well adjusted to the world as they know it. They do not feel in especial need of consolation from any source. And they are yet too young and too inexperienced in life to grasp sympathetically what it is that the more experienced adult finds in religion. For them religion, instead of being an aid in adjustment to their world, is far more often one of the problems of their world. They do not feel the need of it and yet the world seems to insist that they should and that religion is essential. They are conscious of these demands and of their own indifference and they wonder why. Their parents may be accustomed to the regular practice of religious exercises. They not only revere their parents but also love them and do not wish to hurt their feelings, but what this all means to their parents they do not understand. They live in a world of physical vigor and of ratiocination, of athletics

and studies and social diversions. In each they can achieve by effort. They discuss the most profound of the problems of life lightly and often at length. And they are satisfied with interpretation of the whence and the whither and the why of all things that make the mature scholar smile. But the point is that they have explanations which satisfy, or that they are at ease in a simple agnosticism. It is obvious that the more difficult problems of life do not press very heavily upon them.

That this must be a period of comparatively short duration every one who has been through it knows full well. Soon they will be confronted with the world beyond school and college walls; the stresses of love and marriage and professional life and the raising of children will bring problems not so easily solved; sooner or later even death itself must be faced. Most of these are situations to which adjustment cannot be achieved in any adequate manner by their own abilities. If minds so furnished and so endowed are stimulated to keep on thinking instead of stopping satisfied with a few cheap phrases, the world of their comprehension will expand to appropriate dimensions, to dimensions which will include an awareness of those problems of life through the religious solutions of which man has found comfort.

In applying this to the actualities of religious work, a few things quickly become clear. The church designed and led for the religious satisfaction of adults and of youth of more modest advantages obviously cannot without some special developments, which in many instances are as impossible as they are undesirable, do very much for youth of this type. Special instruction

for them, special gatherings and exercises for them, special leadership for them by those who are fully cognizant of the peculiarities of their mental life and who can meet them on their own plane are indispensable. Sermons and orders of worship which appeal to and satisfy the general public are likely to do little more than stir misunderstandings in such youth as these. Their conceptions of religion as a whole and the meanings which they have for the more fundamental of religious concepts are often carry-overs from childhood or early adolescence. These do not fit their larger world, because they contain meanings which are at variance with their more recently discovered knowledge and their newly achieved powers of criticism. And they unfortunately suppose that such meanings are held by the great religious leaders and thinkers. Special leadership and appropriate instruction is indispensable to their enlightenment.

The youth of lesser ability, less favored by endowment and by social opportunities, present a different problem but with many features in common. Native ability in intelligence is, by assumption, for this group much below that of the one presented above. Physical vigor may also be less. Abilities other than those of intelligence and health may be fewer and less serviceable. Educational and social and economic opportunities have been so modest as perhaps even to be a handicap. Self reliance is less easily achieved. The attitudes and habits consequent to much dependence upon others, upon external authority, become well established. Ambitions are aroused by the many contacts of life which can never be realized. The reach far

exceeds the grasp.¹² The world presents a struggle with the odds rather against such youth. There is so much they cannot understand; there is so much they cannot do. Disappointments, distresses, inferiority feelings, fears, come far more easily out of the life struggles of such youth. Such more readily avail themselves of the aid and consolation to be found in religion. From dependence upon parents they shift readily to dependence upon their pastor or their Sunday school teacher or their religion.

The majority of youth are not to be thought of as in either of the above described groups, but as scattered in between. Relatively few have both the capacity and the vigor of the superior group, but many have the vigor which for a time makes them approximate that group in their independence and in their notions of self sufficiency. But a vast number of combinations of traits is possible where there are so many factors. Each individual is thus an individual problem. The one general principle, however, suffices for all: that youth is normally vigorous and enjoying the first flush of independence, because of this and because the stresses of life have not yet fallen heavily upon them youth is a little less likely to feel the need of religious experience than will be true in later years.

Religious Indifference as a Defense.—But the religious indifference of youth may be gravely over emphasized. The indifference is not infrequently a defense reaction. The feelings of youth are easily

¹² For a thought provoking collection of evidence on this topic see Fryer, Douglas, "Industrial Dissatisfaction," *Industrial Psychology*, 1926, 1, 25-29.

stirred. Awe inspiring experiences, in the mountains, or in a cathedral, or in the lecture room, or found through a book, easily stir thoughts of God and human destiny with their appropriate feelings. Youth cannot describe these apical experiences; only the poet can; and youth, especially in later adolescence, is prone to be a bit ashamed of what he thinks is sentimentalism. Hence the defensive pose of indifference. In this particular feature also there is in all probability much variation. Some adolescents may be by temperament much more "mystical" than others. Those with a very low degree of this trait would find religious reactions still more difficult both to understand and to experience.¹³

Significance of Changing Beliefs.—That changes in the content of religious concepts must take place with growth from childhood through adolescence into maturity is based, unfortunately, not upon inductive studies of those changes but upon inference from the available knowledge of genetic psychology. Childish concepts have been collected with some industry, but the most extensive of these are now many years old and it may be that progress in methods of religious education has effected some significant changes. Modern methods in genetic research are being but slowly applied to problems of religious growth and much work has yet to be done in the preliminaries of technique development.¹⁴

¹³ See E. D. Starbuck's *An Empirical Study of Mysticism in Proceedings of the Sixth International Congress of Philosophy*, 1926. Longmans, 1927. Pp. 87-94.

¹⁴ Watson, G. B., *Experiments and Measurement in Religious Education*. New York, Association Press, 1927. Taylor, H. R., and Powers, F. F., "Bible Study and Character," *Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 1928, 35, 294-300.

One study of recent times designed to discover changes in belief through college years and through the maturity of highly educated people has attracted much attention and does incidentally throw some light on the change of concepts. Professor Leuba¹⁵ sought by a questionnaire to discover changes in belief in representative samplings of college students and of American scientists. His conclusion that the percentages of those believing in a personal God and in immortality decline through college years, and that the more eminent scientists report such beliefs in lower percentages than scientists of lesser rank has attracted much attention. His explanation for this decline in belief is in terms of differences in mental ability and in terms of temperamental independence. The courageous, independent mind works itself into social situations where tradition and custom have far less sway. There is therefore, he thinks, a consequent tendency to discard the older beliefs.

This discarding of older beliefs is in accord with all that is known of mental growth. Childish beliefs in fairies and in Santa Claus are discarded. Adolescent beliefs concerning physical and physiological phenomena are later discarded. But where beliefs are used for interpretative purposes the discarding of the old is followed by the substitution of the new. It is a matter of change of concepts. Leuba used for his study a single definition of God and sought to discover what percentage of different classes of subjects accepted that concept. He sought to discover what per-

¹⁵ See Leuba, J. H., *The Belief in God and Immortality*. Boston, Sherman French, 1916. Pp. 340.

centage accepted a belief in God described as being in "intellectual and affective communication with man" and to whom it is possible to pray with "expectation of receiving an answer."¹⁶ He found that the percentage of those accepting this concept declined through college years and that scientists accepted it in a still smaller proportion. He also discovered that among scientists this concept was more frequently accepted by historians of lesser rank, by the non-academic sociologists and the physical scientists both lesser and greater. The lowest frequencies of acceptance were found among the greater academic sociologists, the greater biologists and the greater psychologists. Efforts to obtain answers from American philosophers for this comparison totally failed, and this is most significant.

The life and occupations required by different kinds of scientific specialization inevitably result in the development of different worlds for different kinds of scientists. The world in which the historian lives may be no less complicated and one which demands no less intelligence and independence; but, because of its pre-occupations, it is a very different world from that to which the physicist must adjust himself. And those two worlds again are quite different from that to which the biologist must adjust himself, and these in turn are different from the world as it appears to the psychologist.

This study of Leuba's reveals beautifully the degree to which a particular religious concept aids in adjustment to different kinds of worlds. The concept men-

¹⁶ Leuba, p. 224.

tioned serves better for orientation in the world of the non-academic sociologist than it does in that of the academic sociologist; and it serves the world of the historian better than it does that of the psychologist. But it would not serve at all in the world of the philosophers. They could not answer in fairness to themselves this questionnaire which demanded categorical response to a specific statement of a concept. If they had done so, the results would have been a misrepresentation of their beliefs. It is evident that the world for the philosopher is still more different. Thus this study does not reveal the percentages of those who have found satisfaction in the acceptation, the belief, in the existence of God; but rather does it reveal the degree to which a certain form of God concept serves in particular kinds of human worlds. Had the God concept been defined as it appears in the minds of early adolescents, or of children, still lower percentages would have been obtained and yet other groups than the philosophers would doubtless have found it impossible to respond without prejudice to themselves.

In an unpublished study ¹⁷ made under the writer's supervision, experimentation was undertaken with the inclusion of more primitive concepts as well. The respondents were asked, for example, to answer yes or no to the assertion that "God is like a big man, with eyes that see everything we do, and ears that hear everything we say." Approximately a third of the high school group approved this concept, not more than fifteen percent of college under classmen approved it,

¹⁷ Padilla, S. G., *A Psychological Study of Religious Belief*. A thesis in the library of the University of Oregon.

less than ten percent of upper classmen and with graduate students the proportion dropped to zero. The world to which these different students had to adjust themselves was different, hence a concept still effective for one was no longer effective for another. But the answers to other propositions, phrasing the concept of God differently, revealed that the change was of the nature of an alteration of their God concept and not in its total rejection.

Religion of Mature Years.—The psychological principles of the religious behavior of the adult have been presented in their more general form in the preceding chapters of this book. Specific studies of changes through the years of maturity have never been sufficiently systematic and extensive to reveal changes which many suspect take place. Hall's study of senescence ¹⁸ indicates what might be termed a mellowing effect of age and experience. There is less emphasis upon details, stern belief in many theological doctrines fades out, differences of belief become less significant. The Leuba study just discussed is in large part a study of the beliefs of maturity; but is, like Hall's, limited to a highly educated group and did not undertake to reveal changes in religion with the progress of experience in life. Starbuck's ¹⁹ questionnaire study sought to reveal features of adult religion, but it is far from conclusive for genetic purposes. He thinks his returns indicated a progressively greater appreciation of religion as a life within, that the consciousness of God and of human dependence becomes more and more clear.

¹⁸ Hall, G. S., *Senescence*. New York, Appleton, 1922. Pp. xxvii, 518.

¹⁹ Starbuck, E. D., *Psychology of Religion*, Chaps. 25, 26, 27.

Starbuck attempted to tabulate by percentages the proportions of those who at different ages expressed belief in God, Christ, immortality, and a number of other items. His table indicates in places a rise in the proportions for adult years as compared with later adolescence and early maturity. This seems to justify the supposition that, after the hyper-intellectual period of adolescence is past, religion finds a larger place in life. Careful studies of personal experience through many years and of many individuals is necessary in order to determine just what the nature of the changes may be. The available statistical studies unfortunately compare adults with their contemporary adolescents. What these particular adults believed in their own adolescent years is not available.

It is difficult and sometimes almost impossible for youth to understand the place which religion has in the life of the adult. And the adult, as has been so often demonstrated, is prone to forget the thoughts and the feelings of his own adolescent years. While religious experience must be essentially the same in any period of life, the world with which the adult is struggling, to which he is seeking adjustment, and in which he needs orientation is a world far different from that which confronts the youth. In all probability similar changes mark the course of life on into old age. In spite of the persistence of habit and the loss of plasticity, both the present and the future must take on a very different appearance in the eighties and the nineties from what it had in the earlier decades. Perhaps values shift and concepts change in the later decades as much as in the earlier. Perhaps old age is not after all so childish; it

may be merely a life in a different world from that of the middle years. The passing of the years may thus carry us through differences of world concepts manifesting differences as great or greater than those which distinguish the world of the Occidental from that of the Oriental. That childhood and youth and maturity and old age should so often fail to understand and to sympathize with each other in their religious beliefs and practices is not then so much a matter for wonderment as it is an expression of need for enlightenment.

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